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Beust

MEMOIRS

OF

FRIEDRICH FERDINAND

COUNT VON BEUST

Written by Himself

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION

CONTAINING PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF COUNT BEUST'S CAREER AS PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRIA AND AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON

BY

BARON HENRY DE WORMS, M.P.

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I

I HAVE edited the English translation of the Memoirs of the late Count Beust in accordance with his desire, conveyed to me some years before his death. The present edition differs in some respects from the German one, published by Messrs Cotta, of Stuttgart.

Those portions of the Memoirs which are only of interest to a German reader have, with the author's concurrence, been omitted; notes have been added when necessary to elucidate the text, and extracts are given from letters hitherto unpublished, which will be found among these prefatory reminiscences of my departed friend.

My acquaintance with Count Beust dates from the month of August 1867. At that time the now historical interview between the late Emperor Napoleon III and the Emperor Francis Joseph had been arranged, with the object of patching up the friendly relations which had been impaired by the position taken up by France in the war of 1866, and especially with regard to the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian of Mexico. Although the line adopted by France in 1866 was different from that which she assumed in 1859 in the conflict between Italy and Austria, in which she participated, still those who have studied carefully the course of political events, find no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that had the Emperor Napoleon not allied himself to Italy in 1859, with the result achieved at Magenta and Solferino of crippling Austria by depriving her of a very large portion of her Italian dominions, the events of seven years later would probably never have occurred. What Solferino was to Sadowa, Sadowa was to Sedan.

On the 17th of August, 1867, I arrived at

Salzburg. It was the day preceding that fixed for the entry of the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Eugénie. The picturesque capital of Upper Austria was *en fête*. Flags streamed from every building; the peasants, in their gayest attire, had come from their mountain homes to see, if not to welcome, the lineal descendant of one who had occupied their territory under other conditions. The Hotel de l'Europe was the head-quarters of the Corps Diplomatique—gay uniforms and star-bespangled breasts were to be seen in every corridor, and the uninitiated observer might, from the general appearance presented by the town and its buildings, have wondered whether the quiet little town was to be made the starting-place of a military expedition, or of another historical congress.

Having for some time taken a strong interest in Austrian politics—more especially with regard to their relations to the Eastern question and the interests of England, I had been in correspondence with Hofrath von Hofmann, one of the Aulic councillors of the Austrian Foreign Office—a man of the world and a diplomat of the old school, with a thorough knowledge of men as well as of general politics. I had just arrived at the Salzburg railway station when I perceived M. Hofmann, busily engaged with the station authorities about the great event of the next day. He greeted me in the most cordial manner, and told me that many of my letters to him

on Eastern affairs had been shown to the Austrian Prime Minister, who, having heard that I was coming to Salzburg, had requested him to introduce me to him : he added that Count, then Baron Beust, was occupying a suite of apartments in the castle of Salzburg, and that he would receive me at three o'clock in the afternoon. Accordingly at that hour I proceeded to the famous old Schloss, and was ushered into one of those uncomfortable, albeit picturesque rooms, which were renovated and refurnished at the time of Maria Theresa—awakening recollections of the reign of that great Empress, when Austria was despotically ruled by the first of her Imperial Chancellors, Prince Kaunitz. After a few moments' leisure, in which I had time to examine the faded glories of the past, in the shape of some monumental and peculiarly uncomfortable furniture, the door opened, and Baron Beust came in. I had imagined a tall commanding figure, dressed in all the severe simplicity befitting the high position of constitutional Minister of the Austrian empire, with his button-hole adorned with a multi-coloured rosette, indicating many distinctions conferred upon him by appreciative or obsequious States. The picture my imagination had drawn was not accurate. The genial statesman, who saluted me in excellent English, was dressed in a summer suit of the lightest hue, without the slightest outward evidence of his high office. Rather small in stature, slim but erect in carriage, his

clearly cut, sharply moulded features and frank blue eye created at once in my mind the impression that although the greater part of his life had been passed in the tortuous paths of diplomacy, candour was as much a leading trait in his character as were sagacity and wisdom, the qualities which had led him and entitled him to his present dignities. The shape of the head, the extraordinary sharpness of the features, the high forehead, finely cut nose, small chiselled mouth and slightly projecting chin, vividly reminded me of the lineaments of Pitt, as represented in his statue at the entrance to Westminster Hall. The resemblance which I then detected was, if I may say so, carried still further by the bold and original policy which he inaugurated in Austria, and in which I have often thought he emulated the example of one of the greatest of England's Ministers. He bade me to be seated, and said that as he knew I was conversant with the German tongue, he preferred speaking in that language, although, as I have before stated, he was a perfect master of English. The first observation he made to me shewed that which I afterwards discovered in many years of close and intimate acquaintance with him—that he had an irrepressible vein of humour, or rather of good-natured satire, which cheered his friends and in no small degree disconcerted his political foes. Speaking of the invitation which he had received from the Emperor Francis Joseph to leave Dresden and take the highest post of

the State in Austria, he said, 'I highly appreciate the great honour the Emperor has done me in asking me, who am not an Austrian, to become his Prime Minister at this great and critical period of Austria's history;' and his eye twinkled, and his face lighted up with a smile well remembered by those who knew him, when he added: 'It is a post of great difficulty and great responsibility; but the incident reminds me irresistibly of an anecdote which I believe was told of Voltaire, who, among the many functions that he exercised at the Court of Frederick the Great, used to rewrite and correct the bad verses which that austere and would-be literate monarch used to perpetrate in his hours of ease. It so happened that at the Court of Frederick the Great there were some, if not many, who believed more in the monarch's knowledge of strategy than in his capacity as a poet, and who suspected the great Frenchman of having materially assisted in the composition of the royal verse. One day a courtier who was bolder than the rest ventured to question Voltaire on the point, and his reply was: 'Mon Dieu! il me donne son linge sale à laver.' 'That, said Baron Beust, 'is very much my position at the present moment. I am called in as a sort of State washerwoman to endeavour to purify, if I can, the accumulation of centuries of foul linen which is tainting the atmosphere of the Austrian State.' He went on to say that he had read with pleasure some remarks of mine on the connection which I conceived

must necessarily exist between Austria and that great and vexed problem of European politics, the Eastern question. 'There are few Englishmen,' he observed, 'who recognise the great importance of a friendly understanding between Austria and England. Of course, at the time of the First Napoleon, England's Ministers were anxious to keep up an Austrian alliance—not because they conceived there was any identity of interest between the two Powers, for at that time the Eastern question did not exist, and Russia was also Austria's ally—but because they looked upon Austria as the possessor of large battalions whose physical strength was an element of power, if not an absolute necessity, in the coalition against the Great Napoleon. As years rolled on, and the Congress of Vienna introduced a new epoch in history, the friendly policy of Metternich was forgotten among the English politicians led by Mr Gladstone after his conversion from Toryism to Radicalism. He declaimed against Austria as holding Italy by the sword, and made her responsible for the atrocities of the Neapolitan dungeons, with which, as a matter of fact, she had nothing to do. As to the maintenance of her power in Italy, other nations—including England herself—have always had to repress by very stringent measures, as in India, the attempts of conquered populations to free themselves from the yoke of their conquerors.'

'In 1853, when the first clouds began to over-

shadow the East, and the demands of Nicholas became every day more imperious and more difficult of fulfilment, Austria, had she then not entertained a cordial feeling towards England—which that country, through what I believe was a political mistake, did not reciprocate—might no doubt have turned the scale against England in a manner most disastrous to her and her allies. Austria had all the more reason for doing this, because one of those allies was an Italian potentate. If she had really entertained inimical feeling towards Victor Emmanuel, she could have thrown in her lot with Russia, and it is impossible to foresee what might have been the result, in view of the terribly defective condition of British army organisation, the hollow alliance of France, and the undisciplined auxiliaries England had in the Turkish army and the mercenary troops attached to it. Austria's army of observation on the Pruth did as much to destroy the power of Russia as the victories of Alma and Inkerman. That Russia has never forgiven Austria's conduct in this war, events have shown, and may in the not distant future still further prove.'

'My object,' continued Baron Beust, 'and I have no hesitation in saying it frankly to one who takes an interest in Eastern affairs, is to promote as far as possible a permanently good understanding between great Britain and Austria. At present I have the greatest difficulties to contend with.

I am at the inception of my task, and before I can deal with foreign alliances and external complications, I have to initiate reforms in the internal condition of Austria of the gravest and most sweeping kind. In this task I have to bear in mind that I am a Protestant Minister ruling over Catholics, and that any action of mine taken purely from political and in no way from religious motives, is certain to be construed by the clerical and the feudal party in Austria as directed against the supremacy of the Holy See. Austria has suffered, and is still suffering, from an influence which though perhaps necessary in the days of Charles the Fifth, can have no *raison d'être* under Francis Joseph. Her greatest dangers are those of divided nationality. First and foremost is the individuality of Hungary, which, as an element in the government of the empire, is of capital importance.'

'Among the many obstacles,' continued Baron Beust, 'which I have had to contend with in the task I have undertaken is that of religion. The other is the fact that the feudal aristocracy of Austria resent what they consider the intrusion of a foreigner as the first Minister of the Crown. Austria has had to learn a bitter lesson. She believed that through the circumstance that she includes in her population a very large German-speaking element she could claim not only the sympathy of her German neighbour, but absolute immunity from hostile intervention. The events of

the last few years have shown how futile was this view. I should not have accepted my present position had I not received the assurance that I should be allowed to make sweeping reforms. Germany's one aspiration is to become united under a single ruler, and all nations which have nerved themselves to the great struggle of national independence have done so less by the dictation of the Government than by the evident and progressive will of the people. If Austria had been alive to the fact that a purely despotic form of Government, with feudal Ministers as puppets to give it a spurious flavour of constitutionalism, must necessarily have alienated from her all German national feeling, it is probable that the German sympathies which were common to the two countries would have prevented the possibility of recent events and would have brought about perhaps a permanent union between Austria and Germany. As it is, the reactionary policy of successive Austrian Ministers has given the Prussian Government—and more especially the German people—too good a right to believe that there is nothing in common between them and Austria but their language. Rechberg, Esterhazy, Mensdorff, and Belcredi can never be believed to be the pioneers of progressive liberty, for they are influenced on the one side by the innate prejudices of a hereditary aristocracy, and on the other by a bigoted subservience to the dictates of Rome. I do not know whether you have

heard a saying which always comes to my mind when I have to listen to the views of statesmen of this class. It was, I believe, Windischgrätz who said 'Der Mensch fangt erst beim Baron an' (a man only begins to be a man when he is a Baron). Is it to be wondered at that such an opinion, circulated throughout Germany, with its higher standard of free education, should evoke the deepest antipathy, and that Ministers like Count Bismarck, anxious to promote the unity of the German people, should not hesitate to prove their claim to superiority by trying conclusions with Austria? Those who seek for an explanation of the late war may find it in such mediæval prejudices. I do not excuse the action of Prussia; but you will readily see that those who are fighting at once the battle of nationality and of political union can have but little in common with those who, though speaking the same language as themselves, are fettered by social, political, and religious exclusiveness. Sadowa was a bitter lesson to Austria; but if the result of the disasters of the late campaign is to be, as it will be my endeavour to make it, the means of her regeneration, and the removal of the abuses which have existed for centuries —if it is to be the means of conferring on the people that true constitutional Government which has made England what it is—great good will have resulted from what at first appeared to be overpowering evil. To do this, however, I shall have to strike at the root of many institutions which are sapping the vitality of the

empire and, if continued, will destroy its life. I never will be a party to a purely despotic Government of which I should be only the mouthpiece. The constitution which his Majesty has granted on my recommendation will prove to be a real one in fact as well as in name. Austria must be bound by no other obligations than those which she owes to her own sovereign and her people. Religion must be maintained in its spiritual and not in its temporal aspect. The Ministry of his Majesty must contain those who are in touch with the people, because they are of the people—'Das Ministerium muss vom Volk geschaffen sein weil es vom Volk ist'—and in such a Ministry will be found the elements of strength and of unity which are essential to the maintenance of the dynasty and to the prevention of such disasters as those which we have witnessed in the late war.'

II

Time went so rapidly in this conversation that the Baron's dinner hour of five o'clock had long passed, and we were still talking. The clock struck six before I left the Castle to return to my hotel. But I was so impressed with the broad and statesmanlike views which Baron Beust had expressed, that I at once noted down that which I now here reproduce. As will have been gathered from what he said to me, the Baron foreshadowed the policy which he afterwards

carried out with such conspicuous success. It was my privilege to be in Vienna when the first *Bürgerministerium* (Bourgeois Ministry) was formed, and Austria, for the first time, in discarding the old traditions and prejudices of the Spanish Court, admitted into the Councils of her empire distinguished citizens of the State who were endowed with other and more substantial qualifications than those derived from the mere accident of birth or privilege. One might almost say that the place where Tory democracy was born was not London but Vienna, and that its first prominent exponent was Baron Beust.

With most of the members of the *Bürgerministerium* I was personally acquainted. First and foremost among them was Dr Giskra, the Minister of the Interior—a very distinguished barrister whose enlightened views, backed up by such eminent colleagues as Drs Herbst, Berger and Plener, had immense weight in the Reichrath, and accomplished that which Beust contemplated when he undertook the reins of office, namely, the destruction of the old feudal system of government and the substitution in its place of one more in accordance with our own Parliamentary practice. Previously to the appointment of the *Bürgerministerium* Baron Beust's action had already been so fertile in results that the Emperor had, on the 23rd of June 1867, raised him to the highest post of dignity in the empire, by conferring on him a position which had previously been occupied by only two Austrian

statesmen—Prince Kaunitz and Prince Metternich—namely, that of Reichskanzler (Imperial Chancellor). This was the more remarkable inasmuch as it was no secret that one of the great reforms which he contemplated was the abolition of the Concordat. I was in Vienna at the time that this great change took place, and those who, like myself, had an intimate knowledge of the enormous power of the clerico-feudal party in the State, and of its ramifications throughout the whole of the exclusive Austrian society, were amazed to see a Protestant and a Saxon able to overcome the prejudices of the Court and the powerful machinations of the clergy, and to carry to a triumphant issue so vital a change. Shortly before he accomplished this I was with him in his room in the Ministry on the Ballplatz—the same room as had been successively occupied by the two previous Austrian Chancellors, who probably would have declared, had they been alive, that the repeal of the Concordat meant *finis Austriæ*. As was his wont, he paced up and down the spacious apartment while he talked. He told me that the time had come when what he considered as one of the crowning efforts of his policy was to be accomplished. After showing me many of the voluminous despatches, afterwards embodied in the Austrian Red Book, from the Papal Nuncio at Vienna, he said that he knew well that from the moment when he should achieve the objects of his policy, his enemies would multiply

in untold numbers. He felt, as he spoke, that he was risking all, and that those who wished his downfall would endeavour to make it appear both to the Emperor and to his immediate surroundings that his act was dictated by hatred of the Catholic Church, and was the embodiment of the Lutheran principles in which he had been brought up. His words to me were: 'meine Feinde werden mich als einen Apostel Luther's beschreiben, und möchten mich zum Schicksal Huss verdammen,' (my enemies will describe me as an apostle of Luther, and would like to condemn me to the fate of Huss); 'but,' he added, 'I have taken the responsibility and I accept the obloquy and dangers of my position.' These were at that time very considerable, for he was overwhelmed with threatening letters, which, however, he always disregarded and destroyed. On the 25th of May 1868, the laws were promulgated which abolished the Concordat; and immediately after Beust received at the hands of the people of Vienna a perfect ovation. Crowds assembled on the Ballplatz and cheered him lustily, and the Emperor was greeted everywhere with the acclamations of the people, especially on the Burgplatz and Josefplatz, which were thronged with an enthusiastic multitude. Addresses poured in upon Beust from every part of the country, for it was felt that by the act which he had accomplished, despite the most strenuous opposition, and in disregard of all personal insults and danger, he had saved the best interests of

the State. With reference to this I may relate an amusing anecdote of the late statesman, which was typical of the keen sense of humour to which I have before alluded. The Count, through the fatigues and anxieties of office, was for some days rather indisposed, and had to call in the services of a trained nurse. Such functions were, in the case of male patients, generally fulfilled at Vienna by a monk of the order of the *Barmherzige Brüder*. I called to see him in the morning, and noticed one of these monks in his room. I asked him how he was, and received the following characteristic reply:—'Physisch bin ich wohler, moralisch bin ich betrübt' (physically I am better, morally I am depressed). I asked why? He answered:—'Ich weiss nicht was die Feudalen jetzt sagen werden zu meinen intimen beziehungen zu den Klerikalen' (I do not know what the feudal party will now say of my intimate relations with the church.)

III

Owing to the illness of one of my children I passed much of the years 1869--70 in Vienna, and my relations with Count Beust were of the most intimate and cordial description. Every day I spent several hours in his company; he even kindly offered me a high post in the Austrian Foreign Office, which would have enabled me to

participate officially in the policy into which I had the honour of being initiated from its origin, and in regard to which he was good enough to say I had been of some use to him. I was, of course, unable to accept his flattering offer, which would practically have compelled me to abandon my English nationality, and have prevented me from taking that active part in the politics of my own country to which I aspired. Those mornings which I passed on the Ballplatz belong to the most interesting recollections of my life. The Count was passionately fond of dogs, and the room which was, or should have been, exclusively reserved for the reception of diplomatists was generally occupied by a number of those faithful and perhaps more trustworthy animals. I remember one in particular—a huge black Newfoundland, presented to him by an admirer in Stuttgart. He was called Nero, but as far as I know he possessed none of the obnoxious qualities of his namesake. Conscious, perhaps, of his imperial appellation, he did not, like other dogs, occupy an unobtrusive position under the table, but invariably sat on it; and he and Beust's faithful Saxon servant, whose duty it was to prevent the incursions of unwished-for visitors, formed the outer guard of the Minister's sanctum. The second room beyond this was tenanted by Beust's private secretary, Vraniczani, and beyond this was his own room, which, if there be any truth in the saying that *un beau*

désordre est un effet de l'art, certainly showed the Count to be an artist as well as a statesman. A large desk was on the right hand side of the room, littered with papers, books, despatches, boxes, and *billets-doux*. A little table on the left was devoted to the Count's simple lunch, which usually consisted of a plain cutlet and a glass of beer. Further on was that which the Count prized next in estimation to his despatch boxes and his work—an open piano with the MSS. scores of various charming compositions of his own. Often in the midst of the perusal of an important despatch, or the consideration of a speech the delivery of which might affect the councils of Europe and agitate its bourses, the Count would stop in his peregrinations round the room, and sit down at the piano. His explanation of this was—'Es gibt so viel störendes in der Politik das wir probieren werden ein bisschen Harmonie hineinzubringen,' (there is so much discord in politics that I will try to introduce a little harmony); and then, after rattling off a waltz or striking up a polka, he would resume his dictation at the point where he left off, apparently refreshed by the exhilarating music which he had produced. He was extremely careful and accurate with regard to all his speeches, weighing and re-weighing every word, reading them through, and learning them by heart. His memory was extraordinary, and it has often occurred to me to hear from his own lips a speech which he was afterwards

to deliver in the Reichsrath, when he repeated it almost word for word.

IV

The apartments in the Ballplatz were on a portion of the old Bastei; and the garden upon which the windows of his room opened led to the private entrance of the Burg, used by the Emperor and the Imperial family. Scarcely a day passed when I was with him that he was not summoned to a private audience of the Emperor. The relations between Count Beust and the Emperor were, as he has often told me, most friendly. It seems strange that a monarch who had been brought up almost entirely under the influence of those who represented the old régime in Austria, should have been able at once not alone to recognise the necessity of a truly constitutional government, but freely to adopt that intimate intercourse with his leading Minister which obtains in England, where by long tradition as well as constitutional usage, the Premier is for the time being the actual, if not the titular, head of the State. Beust often spoke to me on this subject. He told me that when he undertook his post after the events of 1866, his great anxiety was lest he should have difficulty in impressing a monarch reared in the reactionary school of Austrian politics, with those broader views which in his opinion were the only ones that could save

Austria from internal revolution and possible disruption. Some short time after my first interview with him at Salzburg, and on the first occasion when I visited him in Vienna, he spoke to me at considerable length on this matter, and it will be interesting here to reproduce a part of that conversation from the notes which I took at the time. 'The dangers which Austria has to face,' he said, 'are of a twofold nature. The first is presented by the tendency of her liberal-minded German population to gravitate towards that larger portion of the German-speaking people now represented by Prussia, Saxony, what was Hanover, Würtemberg, and Bavaria; the second is the diversity of language and race in the empire. Of Austria's large Slav population, the Poles have a natural craving for independence after having enjoyed and heroically fought for it for centuries; while the other nationalities are likely at a moment of dangerous crisis to develop pro-Russian tendencies. Everyone who has studied the German problem—which assumed an acute form in 1866, when I was Minister in Saxony—must feel that, setting aside the question of rivalry with France, which sooner or later will be decided at the point of the sword, it resolves itself simply into the question of political supremacy. The Germans, that is the majority of them, have been and are still anxious not to perpetuate the state of things typified by the German empire as constituted by Charles the Fifth. Bismarck's object is, so far as I know it, to consolidate

Germany under one head, probably that of King William as Emperor. Germany has changed immensely in sentiment and policy since I was at Frankfort as Saxon Minister to the German Bund. The condition of affairs which then existed can never recur; and the action of Prussia in the Schleswig-Holstein question was the first practical demonstration of the underlying principle of Bismarck's policy, which means Germany for the Germans.

'The events of last year are but a further development of this idea. The incorporation of Hanover affords the most striking example of the resolution with which any attempt at resistance will be met, and of the consequences of such resistance, and I have no doubt that, but for the difference of religion, Bavaria might have paid the same penalty, had not Bismarck been convinced that it would be an evil and a danger for Prussia if he endeavoured suddenly to amalgamate a very large Catholic population under Protestant rule. It is possible, I might almost say probable, that if the constitutional problem had been tried earlier in Austria—say for instance after the disastrous campaign of 1859—a bond of sympathy might have been established between Austria and Germany which not only would have rendered active antagonism impossible, but might have united the Court of Berlin with that of Vienna in a pacific endeavour to accomplish that which has now been rudely attempted by force. Germany, with her free

aspirations and her highly cultured people, felt that the existence of a vast contiguous empire with a large population of German-speaking subjects ruled by Ministers like Esterhazy and Belcredi, representing a policy in which the autocratic views of Philip of Spain were blended with a military régime and governed by the *veto* of the Vatican, was not only an anachronism in this age of progress, but a source of constant peril. It is to this conviction, deep-seated in the mind of Bismarck, quite as much as to the wish of an imperious and ambitious Minister to place his country in the position of supremacy to which he conceived it entitled, that we have to seek, and may find, the causes which culminated in the disaster of Sadowa. My object and aim in accepting the immense responsibility which rests upon me is not, as Bismarck would have the world believe, to act in antagonism to those German sentiments in which I have been born and bred, and which during the years when I was Minister at Dresden I have faithfully endeavoured to carry out, but to find a *modus vivendi* between the German-speaking populations and their governments; and without granting the supremacy to either, to maintain the position of both.

'And now to the second danger I have above mentioned, which presents a far more difficult problem. So long as Austria was a purely despotic State, and the Emperor ruled over it as an absolute

monarch—Emperor in Vienna, King in Hungary and Bohemia, Ducal Prince in the other provinces of his vast empire—the local councils had a merely nominal existence, and the governors were there but to register the sovereign's Imperial will and to enforce it by arms if the necessity should arise. The revolutionary wave of 1848 swept over his territories as it did over those of other potentates; laws and decrees which the ignorance and apathy of his people had tolerated, if not approved, in the days of Maria Theresa and the monarchs who succeeded her, raised for the first time among the masses of the population objections and antipathies which generated the firm resolve in their minds to sweep the whole system away. The German element, then as now, took the initiative; but the feeble constitutional measures which were the outcome of popular strife and much bloodshed dwindled down year by year until but a semblance of constitutionalism remained. The comfortable and good-natured Austrian ('behaglicher und gemüthlicher Österreicher') soon forgot what had happened, and occupied himself more with his creature comforts and his dramatic performances than with the development of his constitutional liberties. And—which will show the difficulty of the position—the various nationalities of the empire preferred their servile condition to a state of things which on the very principle of Constitutional government would place all the component parts of the monarchy on an equality,

and cause their representatives to meet in a common parliament on an equal footing. Now my object is to carry out a bloodless revolution ('eine blutlose Revolution muss ich hervorbringen')—to show the various elements of this great empire that it is to the benefit of each of them to act in harmony with its neighbour, and that no Constitution can permanently exist unless every portion of the State is represented by it. But to this I have made one exception. Hungary is an ancient monarchy, more ancient as such than Austria proper. The kingdom of St Stephen has a pedigree of centuries; and its constitutional principle was asserted in the earliest times. Its race and language are entirely different from those of the other peoples which constitute the monarchy; its territorial area is larger than theirs; its population, though less by six millions than that of the remainder of the empire, is much larger than that of any of the nationalities composing it. Its people are powerful, brave, united—and, notwithstanding 1848, loyal; for we must not forget that the terrible events of that year in Hungary were to a great extent caused by a system of military despotism, carried out by Windischgrätz and Haynau, which aroused the just indignation of men of such widely different views and position as Batthyany and Kossuth, and united them in an effort perhaps less directed against the Hapsburg dynasty than against the generals who, under a boy Emperor, were usurping and abusing the functions of Govern-

ment. In the scheme which I have developed I have endeavoured to give Hungary not a new position with regard to the Austrian empire, but to secure her in the one which she has occupied. The Emperor of Austria is King of Hungary; my idea was that he should revive in his person the Constitution of which he and his ancestors have been the heads. The leading principles of my plan are, not the creation of a new kingdom and a new Constitution, but the resuscitation ('Auferstehung') of an old monarchy and an old Constitution; not the separation of one part of the empire from the other, but the drawing together of the two component parts by the recognition of their joint positions, the maintenance of their mutual obligations, their community in questions affecting the entire empire, and their proportional pecuniary responsibility for the liabilities of the whole State. It is no plan of separation that I have carried out; on the contrary, it is one of closer union, not by the creation of a new power, but by the recognition of an old one. This cannot be too often repeated, for I know that there are many people who maintain that I have divided the empire.

'I may be asked why I do not apply the same system to Bohemia. The conditions are absolutely different. The rank of King of Bohemia held by the Emperor of Austria has always been rather a titular than a real one; other sovereigns have held it, and it was more an ornament than a power to the Austrian

crown. Besides, if I were to advocate a separate kingdom for Bohemia, I could only do so by limiting it to the portion of the country which is inhabited by the Slavs, namely, about one-half of the population. But would it be possible to create a Slav monarchy which should rule over an equal population of Germans, the latter representing in a far higher degree the intelligence and manufacturing industry of the whole of Bohemia? There is no parallel between the two cases.'

These words are especially remarkable because they fully explain the policy which changed the Austrian into the Austro-Hungarian empire. I shall have occasion to refer to them again in connection with the question which is now of all-engrossing importance to Englishmen—that of Home Rule.

V

In proportion as the enlightened views and broad statesmanship of Count Beust gradually permeated the almost impenetrable barrier of the exclusive Austrian society, the latent prejudices and bigotry of the feudal nobility began to assume a more militant and active shape. On the occasion of a great fancy fair held for the benefit of the poor of Vienna, at which the stalls were occupied by ladies of the aristocracy, the long pent-up hatred—for I can describe it by no other term—found free vent from the

lips of those who with characteristic narrow-mindedness believed that the salvation of the country, spiritual as well as temporal, was imperilled by the advent of a heretical and foreign Prime Minister. It is vividly in my recollection how two of the leaders of Austrian society, knowing the intimate relations which existed between the Austrian Chancellor and myself, took the opportunity which presented itself of using me as what the Italians aptly term a *sfoga*, for letting off the pent-up steam of their indignation. I was purchasing some trifle of them, when, forgetting the true principles of that Christian charity which they professed to promote, they launched out into the bitterest invectives against the statesman who had been called in by their sovereign to save the monarchy. 'How,' asked one of them, 'can a Protestant hope to do any good in our Catholic country? What right has he to abolish the Concordat, that bond of union which enables the Holy Father to extend his benign influence and have a guiding hand in our affairs?' She even hinted that the reputed influence that I, another heretic, exercised, was an equally baleful and unjustifiable one—adding: 'Man nennt sie doch den adlatus des Beust' (for they call you Beust's aide-de-camp). I answered that I could lay no claim to such a distinguished position, even did I aspire to it; but that no one but a bigot, in his wildest attacks upon the Chancellor, could dare to say that, as Protestant

Prime Minister, he had wished or attempted to interfere in the free exercise by all the subjects of the realm of the creed they professed. For two reasons he had adopted the policy which she condemned: the first was that the guiding principle of government was to leave a sovereign unfettered by obligations dependent on the will of any foreign potentate, temporal or spiritual, and to recognise only those which, if a despotic monarch, he owed directly to his people, if a constitutional one, to their representatives. The days of the pilgrimage to Canossa were over; and a regenerated Austria would never tolerate their return. The second reason was that the system of education in Austria required widening; and however essential to the well-being of the people was religious instruction, it was imperative that that instruction should not be made a bar to the progress of general education among the masses. To this she rejoined: 'Beust is revolutionising our country; he is destroying our institutions, and the result will be ruin to us all.' I answered that I happened to be in Vienna as a boy when it was proposed to pull down the Bastei and make Vienna a modern city. 'The Bastei, built up by the citizens of Vienna to protect themselves against the forces of the Turks, were held at that time to be as essential to the well-being of the town and its citizens as are the mediæval institutions which you now seek to uphold. They have been swept away; you have your new town, your

splendid buildings, all the improvements of sanitation and civilisation, and as a result a healthier, larger, and more contented industrial population. As with the Bastei, which were ramparts against barbarism, so with mediæval laws and compacts which you and those who think with you would seek to perpetuate. The miserable hovels, haunts of crime and disease, which empested Vienna before their demolition, may be compared with the obstruction offered by a prejudiced and privileged class to the efforts of a wise and reforming Minister. The grand buildings have been respected, and they and the long pedigree of their traditions remain as lasting monuments. The useful institutions of the State are also preserved by wise statesmanship; the useless and crumbling ones have been swept away; and so it will be with those who attempt to stem the torrent of just and equitable public opinion.'

I cannot say that these observations found favour with either of the ladies referred to. Although I frequently met them at parties given in the house of the Chancellor whom they had reviled, our relations were never of a very cordial nature; and I cannot help remembering, in connection with these two leaders of society and many others, that similar attacks were made in English society, in the clubs, and in the House of Commons, upon another Minister, almost on similar grounds. Not indeed that he was called upon to sweep away abuses such as existed in Austria in 1866;

but that he—not belonging to the privileged few, having neither the claims of birth nor wealth to give him, as is often the case, a position secured by those attributes alone—the son of a Jew, himself brought up until his twelfth year in the creed of his fathers—succeeded by the sheer force of his indomitable will and masterly intelligence in twice attaining the proud position of Prime Minister of this country, strong in the admiration and friendship of his sovereign and the attachment of the people.

Count Beust had the highest admiration for Lord Beaconsfield; he had known him many years, was very intimate with him at the time when he was Saxon Minister in London, and renewed his acquaintance with him when he came here as representative of the Bund at the London Conference in 1863. My first introduction to Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr Disraeli, took place through a letter which Count Beust gave me at the end of 1867, and the immediate result of which was that I contested the borough of Sandwich in 1868.

VI

Beust was extremely fond of society, and was known as an admirable *causeur* and *raconteur*. Like all great men, he had his petty vanities, one of the most prominent of which was that he was proud of his small feet. On one occasion he made a bet with

one of the leading ladies of the Court that he could wear her shoe. He won the bet, whereupon the lady, with great wit and presence of mind, observed 'Es ist merkwürdig das ein so grosser Minister auf so kleinen Fuss lebt' (It is singular that so great a Minister should live on so small a footing). He entertained largely at the Ballplatz, and on one occasion the principal drawing-room was converted into a theatre, and tableaux were given on three successive evenings, in which all the celebrated Viennese beauties took part, the tableaux themselves being designed by the principal artists of the capital. The *fête* was for a charitable object for which I believe over 100,000 florins was realised. But it was not only at home that the Count indulged in the pleasures of society. He was a constant attendant at the Burg and Opera, and was extremely fond of going to masked balls and hearing from enterprising masks opinions and news which he probably would never have learned from any other source. During the *Fasching* (Carnival) in Vienna one or two masked balls are given in a ball-room in a portion of the Burg (they are in no way connected with Court festivities) called the Catherinensaal. These balls are known by the name of Catherinen Redoutes; the company is extremely select, and the highest ladies of society, in domino and mask, do not, or at least did not at that time, hesitate to go there. The following anecdote, related to me by the Count himself, illustrates the

jovial tone of Viennese society at that period. Beust went to one of these Catherinen Redoutes accompanied by a young man who was a great personal friend. His companion informed him that he had just quitted the family circle, and that although he had urged his wife to accompany him, she unfortunately was unable to do so as she was suffering from indisposition. They entered the brilliantly-lighted hall, and in a few moments they were accosted by two dominos deeply masked and dressed exactly alike in black. One proceeded to enter into a political *badinage* with the Count, the other into a less serious and possibly more agreeable conversation with his companion. They walked for a considerable time about the ball-room, both enchanted with their unknown and unrecognisable partners. Whether the diplomatist's conversation was confined exclusively to politics he never told me: but it was clear from what he overheard that his friend's was not, and that he was for the moment oblivious of the suffering helpmate he had left at home. In fact, it would appear that he allowed his imagination to get the better of his reason and his discretion, for he vowed eternal love to the masked fair one, and taking a flower from his button-hole, handed it to her at her request with the assurance that she would treasure it as a souvenir, only to be restored to him when next they met. 'Alas,' said Beust, with an ironical smile, 'that meeting was all too soon, and not so pleasant as the amorous swain had

anticipated.' The two dominos disappeared in the crowd; the Count and his companion lingered yet awhile in the ball-room, and then returned leisurely home. The next morning his friend came down to breakfast, somewhat ashamed of the incident of the previous evening. In a few moments his wife appeared, and with anything but a gracious smile handed him the flower which he had presented to her at the ball. The Count went on to say that he was equal to the occasion, and stoutly maintained that he had recognised her as the masked domino—which statement was received with a scepticism worthy of the superior acuteness of the sex.

Count Beust was very fond of horse-exercise, and his white horse was well known in Vienna as 'Beust's Schimmel.' He rode every day in the Prater, and when he came to England the old Arab steed was almost as familiar in London as it was in Vienna. He was much attached to it, and rode it on the memorable occasion when the Emperor Francis Joseph was crowned King of Hungary at Pesth. He took it with him to Paris when he was appointed Ambassador to the Court of the Tuileries, where it died of old age.

VII

During my stay in Vienna I carefully watched the course of political events from the period of Count Beust's accession to office after the Austro-Prussian

war, and noted the extraordinary changes which had taken place in the empire. It then occurred to me that a work which should accurately describe the progress of constitutionalism in Austria, the political aspirations of its various nationalities, the creation of that dual system which resuscitated the ancient Hungarian constitution and gave to the Emperor of Austria the potential as well as the titular appellation of King of Hungary, and the circumstances of the abolition of the Concordat, might be of interest and instruction to the reading public in England, whose ideas about Austria were mainly derived from the passionate diatribes of English politicians, never weary of inveighing against her policy in Italy and the supposed oppression of the Hungarians. I communicated my idea to Count Beust, who welcomed it, and assured me that he would most willingly place at my disposal any material I should think fit to use in order that my work might not merely represent the ideas which I might personally have conceived with regard to events in Austria, but also be an accurate history of what had taken place from 1866 to the period of its publication. To facilitate the object I had in view, and to ensure the quiet necessary for so arduous a task, he kindly placed at my disposal a room in a portion of the Foreign Office situated in the Herren Gasse, and gave me access to all the State papers and records bearing on the subject. The book was published in London at the beginning of

1870, under the title of 'the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Policy of Count Beust.' The first edition appeared under the *nom de plume* of 'An Englishman.' Personally, I did not attach any importance to the work, except as an accurate record of facts, and I therefore omitted to reserve to myself the usual author's rights. I had reason to regret this, inasmuch as two unauthorised translations appeared soon after, one in Paris and the other at Leipzig. Six years later, at the time of the Russo-Turkish War, the book having been often quoted to show Austria's relations to the Eastern Question, I published a second edition of it in my own name, and added a chapter on the aspect of that question with regard to the War. It may be interesting here to note that although this work was written in Vienna, and a vast amount of official information was supplied to me by Count Beust, he never saw it until it was actually published. The reason which he gave—and which I have no doubt was absolutely sincere—was that he wished to feel that no remarks or suggestions of his had in the smallest degree biassed what he desired to be an impartial history.

In this connection I may not perhaps be considered as overstepping the task which I have undertaken if I compare the following statement made by Mr Gladstone on the 8th April 1886, on the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, with the condition of affairs in the Austrian empire which

induced Count Beust to propound his dualistic policy. Mr Gladstone then said :—

'I take another case—the case of Austria and Hungary. In Austria and Hungary there is a complete duality of power. I will not enter upon the general condition of the Austrian empire, or upon the other divisions and diversities which it includes, but I will take simply this case. At Vienna sits the Parliament of the Austrian monarchy; at Buda-Pesth sits the Parliament of the Hungarian Crown; and that is the state of things which was established, I think, twenty years ago. I ask all those who hear me whether there is one among them who doubts? Whether or not the condition of Austria be at this moment perfectly solid, secure and harmonious, after the enormous difficulties she has had to confront on account of the boundless diversity of race; whether or not that condition be perfectly normal in every minute particular, this, at least, cannot be questioned, that it is a position of solidity and safety compared with the time when Hungary made war on her—war which she was unable to quell when she owed the cohesion of the body politic to the interference of Russian arms; or in the interval that followed, when there existed a perfect legislative union, and the supreme Imperial Council was in Vienna. What again was the case of Austria, where the seat of the empire in the Archduchy was associated not with the majority

but with the minority of the population, and where she had to face Hungary with numbers far greater than her own? Even there, while having to admit what was infinitely more complex and more dangerous than even prejudice can suppose to be that which I am about to suppose, it is not to be denied that great relative good and relative success had been attained.'

At the very beginning of this quotation it will be seen that Mr Gladstone shrunk from facing the difference between the position of affairs in Austria, which led to the re-establishment of the Hungarian Constitution, and that which exists in England and Ireland. His statement that in Austria and Hungary there is complete duality of power is also incorrect, as by the system of delegations or joint diet, which I shall subsequently explain, continuous solidarity in the affairs of the empire is maintained. He goes on to say that he 'will not enter upon the general condition of the Austrian empire or upon the other divisions and diversities which it includes;' but in those divisions and diversities we must find the causes of the establishment of the dual system, and it is obviously illogical for Mr Gladstone to attempt to draw similar conclusions from distinctly different premises.

Mr Gladstone says 'at Vienna sits the Parliament of the Austrian Monarchy; at Buda-Pesth sits the Parliament of the Hungarian Crown,' implying, if not actually stating, that there is no link between those institutions, that each is absolutely independent of the

other and free from every trammel in connection with the general empire. The very words 'Austro-Hungarian empire,' by which the Austrian empire was to be known officially, after the dual system was inaugurated, go far to prove the fallacy of such an assumption. But there is one absolute dissimilarity between Mr Gladstone's scheme of Home Rule in Ireland and that of Count Beust. Of this dissimilarity I can only conclude that Mr Gladstone was not aware.

The proposed Irish Parliament was to have no voice in questions of peace or war, of the army or the navy, or of foreign affairs. Such matters were to be left exclusively to the Imperial Parliament. Equally excluded were international treaties, customs dues, indirect taxes, and questions of currency. Now what is the case in Austria-Hungary? Under the title of 'affairs in common' are defined the direction of the foreign policy of the empire, together with its diplomatic representation abroad, and a joint army under the supreme command of the Emperor. Both parts of the empire have to contribute proportionately to the cost of the Ministry of foreign affairs and of the army. All international treaties are subject to the sanction of both legislatures. All affairs requiring equal consideration, such as the customs dues, indirect taxes, and the currency, are also to be regulated by treaties subject to the approval of both moieties of the realm.

In order to regulate the proper constitutional management of the affairs 'in common' the institution of the 'Delegations' was introduced. Each legislative assembly elects a Delegation consisting of sixty members, forty of whom are elected by each of the lower houses, and twenty by each of the upper houses. These Delegations assemble alternately at Vienna and Pesth for the purpose of confidentially discussing the bills or propositions of the Government, and of communicating to each other the resolutions come to thereon, exchanging views on points of difference, and, in case no agreement is arrived at, proceeding to a division without a debate. The concordant resolutions of both delegations are sanctioned by the monarch as 'common laws,' the execution of which is entrusted to the Ministries of both countries. Finally, the joint Austro-Hungarian Ministers are responsible to the Delegations which also vote the budget. Where, I repeat, is the analogy which Mr Gladstone sought to establish? The two parliaments of Vienna and Pesth are absolutely co-ordinate, for in matters relating to peace or war and other important points which I have before enumerated, neither can act without the other; and this inability to take separate action—involving as it does the necessity of entire accord between the two legislatures in matters affecting the general interests of the empire—affords the best possible guarantee against a separatist policy, which as such certainly

does not exist in the Home Rule scheme of Mr Gladstone.

Mr Gladstone asks whether the position of Austria is not one of solidity, of safety compared with the time when Hungary made war on her? Nobody would hesitate to answer in the affirmative. At that time the revolution of 1848 was raging, and the whole of Europe was more or less dangerously convulsed. But the dual system was not introduced as a result of that revolution. It was not introduced until nineteen years afterwards, under circumstances to which I have already alluded in detail; and here I may quote the words of Count Beust himself in two letters which he wrote to me from Altenberg in the spring and summer of 1886, after the introduction of Mr Gladstone's bill. In these letters he says:—

'Independently of the demerits and dangers of Mr Gladstone's Home Rule scheme, he has to my mind little or no excuse for introducing it, and the parallel he draws between it and the dual system I inaugurated is utterly fallacious. Agrarian agitation is the plea which he uses for giving the Irish people a separate parliament. I believe that the agrarian system in Ireland has for centuries been a bad one, and the land legislation of 1881—whatever people may think of it from a moral point of view—will unquestionably bring about good results. But how these results are to be beneficially increased by giving Ireland a separate parliament and handing over its government

to the avowed enemies of England, I cannot see, for one of its first acts would be to pass laws—virtually decrees of expulsion—against the landlords, to banish capital from the land, and materially to aggravate the general condition of the peasantry. As an old statesman I should consider that the establishment of an Irish Parliament, raising, as it unquestionably would, aspirations on the part of the people to free themselves from the English yoke, and increasing the power of political agitators, is fraught with the gravest danger to England. I cannot understand Mr Gladstone quoting Austria-Hungary as an example, for, independently of the great dissimilarity between the two systems, Mr Gladstone forgets the condition of Austria when the Hungarian Parliament was established. Austria had been beaten after a short but most disastrous war; Prussia had forbidden her any further interference in German affairs; the country was almost in a state of latent revolution; and an outbreak in Hungary, promoted by foreign agents and foreign gold, with Klapka doing Count Bismarck's bidding, was in the highest degree probable, and would, had it occurred, have led to almost overwhelming disaster. Knowing this, I felt bound to advise the Emperor to accede to the views of the Déak party, securing the solidarity of the empire by the guarantees afforded through the systems of delegations and joint budget. Mr Gladstone cannot urge upon your House of Commons the same reasons

for granting Home Rule to Ireland. England has not been, and I trust never will be, beaten as Austria had been beaten. No foreign foe has been dictating terms at the gates of London. No revolution is latent; and, a point also worthy of consideration, the population of Ireland is only about five millions, including those Protestants who are against the Home Rule scheme, as compared with what I should think was the wish of the great majority of the thirty millions composing the population of Great Britain; whereas the area of Hungary is greater than that of Austria proper, and its population is nearly one-half of the total population of the empire.'

The incidents connected with the establishment of the dual system in Hungary present, indeed, such peculiar features of interest at the present time that it may not be out of place to recapitulate the circumstances which led to an arrangement not in the least degree intended to separate the two great portions of the empire, but on the contrary to consolidate their union. The view urged by Mr Gladstone and his Irish supporters that the dual system in Austria-Hungary affords a parallel and a precedent for the establishment of a statutory parliament in Dublin can be shown to be utterly fallacious from the conditions which led to the establishment of that system, and from the views entertained by its author on the subject.

VIII

When Count Beust was called to the head of affairs on the 30th of October 1866, Austria had just emerged from a fearful conflict. She had been hopelessly defeated. Bohemia was converted into one vast battlefield, and, had they so wished, there is little doubt that the Prussian troops might have occupied Vienna. As a result, the German element in Austria was excluded absolutely from any voice in the affairs of the mother country. The feeling among the German population of Austria was bitter in the extreme; and in view of this and of the dissensions which existed among the other nationalities, Count Beust felt that unless some resolute effort were made to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Germans by means of a real constitutional government, and at the same time to meet the views of the Déak party in Hungary, the dismemberment of the empire would inevitably result.

Thus it will be seen that the very origin of the Dualistic system was fundamentally different from that of the Home Rule scheme of Mr Gladstone. Moreover, Counts Belcredi and Esterhazy wished to exclude parliamentary government and to return to absolutism. To have adopted such a line of policy would have been to accentuate and increase the dissatisfaction of the all-powerful German element, to force them into active opposition, to cause them to

gravitate to Germany, to give undue preponderance to the enormous Slav population of the empire, and last, but not least, to strengthen the hands of the Déak party in Hungary in a struggle for complete independence. In a word, it became necessary for Count Beust to face this problem: either to restore to Hungary a position which she had in some degree formerly enjoyed, or else to add to the great dangers of internal disruption in Austria proper at a moment when she was enfeebled by a most disastrous war, threatening revolution in Hungary, with the possible and not improbable consequence of further dangerous external complications.

It is evident that there is no analogy between this position and Mr Gladstone's demand for Home Rule in Ireland. The dual system of Count Beust had for its object the unification and consolidation of the empire at a moment when, as the outcome of a war, the most powerful component parts of the monarchy both claimed constitutional independence almost as a *sine quâ non* of continued allegiance. It must be remembered that in Austria constitutionalism was more a form than a reality, and at that period a return to absolute Government would, as I have before pointed out, have meant nothing short of destruction.

In 1866 Austria ceased to be a German Power; and so wise a diplomatist as Count Beust could not fail to see that internal dissensions coming on the top of ruinous defeat, might lead to the creation

of a vast German empire, drawing into itself the German speaking portions of Austria, and even the Austrian capital. The surest mode of bringing about such a result would have been to ignore the wishes of Déak and Andrassy, and to allow the spark of dissension in Hungary to be fanned by them and those who thought with them, into a flame which would have been artificially increased and fed by the money and influence of another power. It was known that Prussia's object was to bring about a catastrophe which should transfer the Austrian capital from Vienna to Pesth, as the chief city of a new eastern empire. This was notoriously the policy of Count Bismarck, not because he loved Austria less, but because he loved Germany more; indeed he afterwards expressed it in the words—'*Oesterreich muss sich nach Osten verlegen*' (Austria must move eastward.)

Count Beust wisely sought, by introducing the dual system, and by making Count Andrassy President of the Hungarian Ministry, to avert the dismemberment of the empire whose destinies he had been called by the Emperor to control. Where again is the parallel between such a state of things and the necessity for a Parliament on College Green? With regard to the latter, we have the oft-repeated assurance of those chosen to represent and speak for Ireland that it is the thin end of the wedge which it is hoped will permanently cleave the two countries. As to the former, I have shewn by facts that the dual

system in Austria-Hungary was conceived and carried out by Count Beust for the purpose of preventing disunion.

Again, Count Beust's views with regard to Déak's dualistic scheme had the full support of the great majority of the German party in Austria. The leaders of the party held what is now an historical meeting in Aussee, accepted the dual principle, and pledged themselves to do all in their power to promote it. This further shows how different the circumstances under which the dualistic scheme was introduced were from those under which Mr Gladstone proposed his Home Rule scheme. It must be remembered that the German party in Austria represents the most highly educated and intelligent portion of the population, as well as the preponderating element in trade and commercial industry. At that time the Hungarian population was, in round numbers, about fifteen millions, while that of the rest of the empire was between nineteen and twenty millions. The total population of the empire, estimated at that time at about 34,650,000, embraced 10,600,000 Slavs in the North-Western and South-Western portions of the empire, whose Slavophile tendencies were rather antagonistic than generally favourable to a progressive policy, and 2,200,000 Poles. The balance was made up of Ruthenians; Roumanians in the Bukovina, North-Eastern Hungary and Transylvania; Italians in Dalmatia and Goritz;

and other nationalities, most of whom were not very loyal to the dynasty. Count Beust thus felt himself supported in his policy by the consciousness that it had the approval of a very large proportion of the population of Austria, having the greatest regard for its interests and its union.

In a subsequent letter to me from Altenberg he wrote:

'The separation of Ireland from England would, in my opinion, inevitably take place some years after the institution of the Home Rule Parliament. Reading the history of the time when Grattan's Parliament existed, every politician must be struck by the fact that, so far from its having promoted a loyal spirit in Ireland and one friendly to England, the reverse was the case; and that often sympathy was expressed with, and active support tendered to the French. What happened then would certainly happen again now; and the peril is in my mind immensely increased by the sympathy and support which the agitators in Ireland receive from America. With regard to Hungary, one great guarantee against her separation from the empire was to be found in the fact that she was surrounded by Slav States, and that her separate existence as a kingdom is impossible. Once separated from Austria, she would be absorbed. Ireland, on the contrary, as an island separated geographically from England, could indulge in the wild dream of an independent

existence; but, should the dream become a reality, it would necessitate an enormous increase in the naval and military power of England to prevent Ireland, through foreign machinations, from becoming a source of the gravest danger to the sister country. Again: her claims to a separate parliament have no analogy whatever to those of Hungary. The latter country has her separate history, a constitution which had been despotically abolished, her own language—not, as in Ireland, confined to a few outlying districts, and with no literature, but the language of the educated as well as of the illiterate, of the courts of law, of poets and historians. Moreover, and this is a point of great difference between the two countries, Hungary was never represented in any Austrian Parliament. How therefore, can Mr Gladstone use my dualistic system as a precedent for his scheme of Home Rule? In Hungary there was a unanimous demand, without distinction of class or religion, for a restitution of the ancient privileges of the country, which in no way resembled, so far as I can make out, those possessed by Ireland when there was an Irish Parliament. The Imperial Parliament of England may, and as a student of history I should say has, made grave mistakes in the Government of Ireland, for which both parties in the State may be held responsible; but I do not believe that Ireland would obtain more justice from an Irish Parliament, especially as the

present agitation proves that the founders of the National League would then become the rulers of the country. As a lover of England and her free institutions, I sincerely hope that an Irish Parliament may never be established.'

This was written but a few months before his death; and knowing as I do how conscientiously he studied English politics, reading the debates in the *Times* daily, and following every move on the political chess-board, his views must, I am sure, possess great weight with all who have the true interests of England at heart. No sincerer admirer of England and of the English, of their equal laws and model constitution, could be found among the statesmen of Europe; and his long residence among us gives his opinions a special claim to consideration.

IX

Count Beust, notwithstanding the very arduous labours of the day, found time to go a great deal into society in Vienna, and had a remarkable faculty for shaking off the cares of office in light and agreeable conversation. The British embassy was perhaps the house where he was the most constant guest, especially at the time when Lord Bloomfield was our Ambassador. The hospitable mansion in the Herren Gasse, for so many years the home of the English representatives at the Court of Vienna, will be remembered

by all those who, like myself, received invitations from the late Lord Bloomfield and his accomplished wife. I often met Count Beust there, either at small dinners or at official receptions; and I recollect that on one occasion when nearly all the Corps Diplomatique were assembled, the Count said to me that he was always delighted to meet Lord Bloomfield, because his cheery welcome counteracted the diplomatic reserve which his high representative position imposed upon him. He added: 'Bloomfield's Gesicht ist frei und offen, aber der Graf S—— hat wass ich nennen würde ein falsches gemüthliches Blick' (Bloomfield has a frank open face, but Count S—— has an expression which I should call one of sham good nature). The high personage to whom he referred was very accurately described by these words. Singularly astute, and entrusted with the representation of a very great country, his endeavour seemed to be, by a stereotyped smile, to conceal the importance and gravity of the subject upon which he was called to negotiate. He only wanted a periwig and diamond snuff box to complete the picture of a diplomatist of the old school. On one occasion, when he was dining with Count Beust, and he and others were discussing the good and bad elements which go to make up a typical diplomatist, Count Beust wittily remarked: 'Mon Dieu, Monsieur le Comte, la diplomatie est l'art de mentir facilement et impunément,' an aphorism in which the distinguished Ambassador who had

partaken of his hospitality heartily agreed. I may mention that one of the Count's most intimate friends was Mr (now Baron) Ludwig von Oppenheimer. His friendship with him dated from his Saxon days, as young Oppenheimer was a native of Leipzig, and the Count had known him from his boyhood. He came to Vienna after 1866, became a naturalised Austrian subject, and was elected a member of the Reichsrath for one of the electoral divisions of Bohemia, in which he possessed a large estate. The Count had a very high opinion of the young Saxon, whom he sent during the Franco-German war with confidential despatches to Prince Bismarck at Versailles; and he has since attained a high position in the Austrian parliament. Among the officials of the Austrian Foreign Office no one had such influence with Count Beust as Hofrath von Hofmann, to whom I have before alluded, nor was the confidence of the Count in any way misplaced. Baron Hofmann was in every respect a remarkable man. A scholar and a most accomplished linguist, he had, which was still more valuable in the office which he held, a singular power of anticipating public opinion. He felt the pulse, so to speak, of the people, correctly diagnosed their sentiments, and advised his chief as to the best remedies to be prescribed for the political maladies of the State. He was the head of the Press Bureau, and Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. At that time, as now, there

existed in Austria a censorship of the press, which was carried out by what was called a Press Bureau. To us in England such a condition of things is strange and repugnant. We trust, and rightly, to the voice of public opinion to prevent the liberty of the press from degenerating into license, and find in our law of libel ample protection against any publication of slanderous and malicious reports. In Austria, however, where the constitutional system is comparatively new, and where national party strife and reactionary bigotry expose the constitutional system to incessant attacks, there may be some excuse for the existence of a censorship. In the days of Count Beust this was exercised with extreme caution. The other members of the Press Bureau were Baron Teschenberg and Hofraths Weil and Orges. Copies of the newspapers in Vienna were supplied to these functionaries at the moment of distribution, and if any article appeared which was in their opinion maliciously injurious to the government or disloyal to the Emperor, the editor immediately received notice not to proceed with the delivery of the paper, which had to be destroyed, and another copy of the journal was then printed with the incriminated article omitted. There is also an official organ in Vienna, the *Wiener Zeitung*, a sort of *London Gazette* with leading articles.

Of the members of the Press Bureau as it then existed, there are none now alive; the last, Baron

Teschenberg, rose to a high position in the diplomatic service, and died comparatively young a year or two since. One of the most remarkable and well known of the officials in the Austrian Foreign Office at the time I am speaking was Hofrath von Ascher. Herr von Ascher was the head of the Cipher Department of the office, and, probably from passing his life in ciphering and deciphering despatches, he had acquired the sphinx-like look and manner which distinguished him. Extremely tall, very thin, with singularly high shoulders, a clean shaven face, and straight brown hair, suspiciously like a wig,—a person seeing him for the first time would be puzzled to know whether he was the leading comedian at the Burg Theatre or a diplomatist from the Ballplatz. He certainly looked much more like the former than the latter when I used to see him nearly every morning entering Count Beust's room with a huge green portfolio under his arm which, after making two or three kangaroo-like bows, he proceeded to open. He then put on a pair of gigantic spectacles, and began to read to the Count in a stentorian but monotonous voice the various despatches which he had unravelled. This done, he retired without saying another word, after repeating the series of remarkable obeisances with which he had entered. I was once in Gastein with Count Beust for the water-cure, and Ascher was also there in his official capacity. One day the Count and myself

were walking along the promenade in front of the beautiful water-fall. It had been raining heavily—as it generally does at Gastein—and the roads were muddy and slippery. M. Ascher was coming towards us, and greeting the Count with the series of extraordinary contortions which he meant to be bows, he slipped and fell at full length in the mud. Beust, after expressing the hope that he had not hurt himself, said 'Zum Glück sind sie noch nicht Minister; wenn sie es wären, so würden Sie es viel schwerer finden sich von einem Fall zu erheben' (luckily you are not yet a Minister; if you were, you would find it much more difficult to rise after a fall). Ascher, though covered with mud, and somewhat bruised, could not help smiling at this sally, and did not attempt to repeat the performance which had led to his discomfiture.

With the exception of Prince Bismarck, Count Beust was probably the possessor of more foreign decorations than any other diplomatist. He was also Chancellor of the Order of Maria Theresa, an exceptional dignity conferred upon him by the Emperor about the time when he authorised him to quarter the Imperial Eagle in his coat of arms. The Chancellorship of the Order of Maria Theresa did not entitle him to wear the insignia of the Order, which are never given for civil service, but only as a reward for exceptional gallantry or successful strategy before the enemy. The Orders

of which he was most proud were the Grand Cross of the Austrian Order of St Stephen, the Collar of the Annunziata—the highest Italian decoration—and the Grand Cross of the Black Eagle of Prussia. He could not receive the Austrian Order of the Golden Fleece, as that can only be worn by Catholics. In connection with the many stars conferred upon him by European and Eastern Powers, the following anecdote may be interesting. I was with him one day in Vienna when he asked me to unlock a large drawer in which the cases containing the stars and crosses were tossed about in hopeless confusion. 'The Minister of —— has asked for an audience to-day,' he said, 'and I wish you would kindly get me out the Grand Cross of the Order of the country he represents, as I learn from his letter that his visit is an official one.' After looking in vain for the order he mentioned, I told him it was not there. He was much annoyed at this, and immediately dispatched his secretary to the jeweller Roth, whose well-known shop on the Kohlmarkt is the counterpart of that of Grétly in the Palais Royal, with instructions to buy the decoration in question, and bring it back at once. This was done, and the Count having put it on, waited for the Foreign Minister. In due course the latter appeared, carrying in his hand a piece of parchment and a case. Beust, being extremely short-sighted, took no notice of this, but engaged him in conversation and endeavoured to elicit from him the

object of his visit. The Minister, Baron * * *, seemed greatly embarrassed, and Beust, thinking that perhaps he had some important diplomatic secret which he might feel a difficulty in communicating before me, told him that he could speak without reserve. Whereupon the discomfited diplomatist, whose eyes had been constantly rivetted upon the star with which Beust's coat was adorned, stammered out that he had been commanded by his Royal master to confer on Count Beust the Grand Cross of the * * *; that he held in his hand the insignia and the diploma, but that as his Excellency was, as he observed, already the possessor of the Order, his mission, so far as the investiture was concerned, was at an end. Beust's face at this *dénouement* was a study. I made vain attempts to conceal my mirth, and the plenipotentiary looked grave and sad. I was anxious to see how the Count would get out of the dilemma, but he was quite equal to the trying occasion. 'Excellenz,' he said, 'werden diesen Irrthum meinerseits leicht verzeihen: so viele Grossmächte haben mich mit Ihren hohen Orden beehrt, dass ich mir nicht denken konnte dass ich dieselbe Ehre von Seiner Majestät nicht besass.' (Your Excellency will, I am sure, readily excuse my error. So many great Powers have honoured me with their decorations that I could not believe that I did not already possess one from his Majesty your sovereign). The answer was adroit, for although the Minister represented a kingdom, he could in no way

be considered as the emissary of a first-class power. The compliment pleased and mollified him; the Count took off the purchased order and put the other in its place, and the incident was considered, in diplomatic language, as *non avenu.*

X

At his receptions Count Beust discarded the antiquated restrictions as to rank, religion, and parentage, which not only existed in the Austrian Court as remnants of mediæval prejudice and bigotry, but were generally imitated by the Austrian aristocracy in their own palaces. Although of an old noble Saxon family, Beust ignored class distinctions, and he often used to animadvert in the strongest terms on what he considered not only a social absurdity but an actual danger to the State. He adopted the view of Lord Beaconsfield, so well expressed in 'Sibyl,' and strove to bridge over the chasm which separates class from class, and bring them into closer harmony as citizens of the same country. Speaking of the exclusiveness of the feudal aristocracy, Beust once said to me: 'Unsere Österreichische feudal-Aristokratie fürchtet den Kontakt mit der äussern Welt, und hütet sich davon wie man eine Leiche von der äussern Luft hütet; Sie fürchtet wahrscheinlich zu verfallen. Wenn Sie zu schwach ist mit den äussern Welt zu leben, muss Sie, sowie alles in der Natur, zu grunde gehen

(our Austrian feudal aristocracy fears the contact of the outer world, and protects itself from it as one protects a corpse from the outside air. Probably it fears to fall to pieces. If it is too weak to live with the outside world, it must perish, like everything in nature). No truer words than these were ever uttered. In England, where the Constitutional principle is the growth of centuries, where education is spreading year by year its beneficent influence among the masses of the people, and where the legislature is truly representative, such a state of things would be impossible, for anyone attempting to bring it about would be in an impotent minority. In Austria, however, until Count Beust entered office, popular representation was a farce, and the Upper Chamber was not, as with us, recruited from the ranks of illustrious and deserving citizens. His efforts, therefore, were not only directed to breaking down a foolish barrier which maintained ignorance and superstition by preventing their admixture and dilution with industry and intelligence, but it brought about a genuine Constitutional system, such as had never before existed in Austria. As with class, so with religion. There was but little cordiality between Catholics and Protestants; and anti-semitism—though seldom actively aggressive—was always latent and ready to break out on the slightest provocation. At Count Beust's dinners and receptions, nobles and bourgeois, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews were

received on an equal footing; and I greatly value the encouraging and approving letter I received from my old friend apropos a resolution which I moved in the House of Commons denouncing the action of Russia with regard to the atrocities committed on her Jewish subjects, and urging Mr Gladstone's Government to protest against them in the name of Christianity, civilisation and humanity. 'Everyone,' wrote the Count, 'will sympathise with you in your efforts to help your suffering people in Russia. No Government ought to disregard such an appeal to the best instincts of man. No Government can dare to withhold an expression of sympathy with the sufferer or of condemnation of the oppressor. You know my detestation of religious persecution in every form, and I may tell you that of which you may not be aware—that my aversion to anti-semitism, even when it assumed a form far less cruel and atrocious than that to which you call the attention of the British House of Commons, is not of recent date, but was a leading feature of my policy when I was Minister at Dresden many years ago. I then introduced laws having for their purpose the removal of Jewish disabilities, and during the whole time I was Prime Minister in Austria it was constantly my endeavour to prove that I recognised no differences on the ground of religion, but that socially, and as far as I could politically and officially, I was prepared to recognise merit whether I found it in a Jew or in a Christian.'

This was strictly accurate, for Beust felt that the same tolerance on which he relied and which he claimed for himself as a Protestant Minister in a Catholic country should be extended by him to those who differed from him in creed.

XI

In 1869 disquieting rumours as to the relations between France and Germany were perpetually agitating the councils and exchanges of Europe. It was felt that the rivalry between the Teuton and the Gaul must at no distant period culminate in a struggle in which the supremacy of one or the other must be decided by arms. Count Beust was keenly alive to this, and long before the incident of the proposed accession of a Hohenzollern to the throne of Spain on the 3rd of July 1870 which led, ten days afterwards, to the insult offered to France at Ems and the consequent disastrous war, I had had many conversations with him on the strained relations between the two countries, and gathered from him his views as to possible complications. I am betraying no secret when I say that the impression which he always conveyed to me was that should the hour of active strife arrive, his policy as the directing spirit of Austria would be to prevent, if possible, that power from taking sides in the struggle. Austria, in his opinion, had only commenced her regeneration.

She had to cultivate the arts of peace, with their consequent development of industry and prosperity. She had to strengthen the bonds of her discordant nationalities. She had to remember that the policy of a nation, as of an individual, ought not to be one of revenge. Above all she had to bear in mind that her empire, notwithstanding the events of 1866, was by education, civilization, and also in a great degree by population, a German one; and that to engage her German subjects as the allies of France against the other German States would not only reproduce in all its unnatural conditions the terrible strife of 1866, but would in the event of failure mean their separation from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and bring about its disruption and ruin. Beust was a German and a patriot, and had the same honest regard for his adopted country as if it had been that of his birth. He firmly believed, and events showed the sagacity of his reasoning, that when the conflict came, Germany would be united against a common foe; and that no considerations of differences of religion or antipathy to Prussia, its King, or its Prime Minister, could prevent the German speaking people from uniting in a solid phalanx against France. If the views which he entertained, and which his correspondence with the French ambassador at Vienna proves him to have expressed, had been accepted by the advisers

of Napoleon III, the war of 1870 might not have happened, and the terrible catastrophe of Sedan would have been averted. The French Ambassador, the Duc de Gramont, was one of the most remarkable figures in Austrian society. Strikingly handsome, of imposing and majestic stature, he was an ornament to every salon. He was in truth a *preux chevalier*, and his one fault was that he was too optimistic in his views, and too readily believed in that which he wished to be true. I knew him well, was often his guest at the French embassy on the Lobkowitzplatz, and continually met him at the Foreign office and in the houses of mutual friends. He was summoned from his post as French Ambassador at Vienna to fill the more onerous one of Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris about the time when the tension between France and Germany was becoming dangerously acute. He left Vienna, and returned there after a short stay in Paris to receive from the Emperor the grand cross of St Stephen in diamonds, and to take leave of his colleagues and many friends in the Austrian capital before finally quitting it. I was present at a party at the Ballplatz given in his honour, and there he conversed with me on the clouds which appeared to be gathering over France and Germany, and asked me what I believed to be Count Beust's views with regard to the probable action of Bavaria in the event of hostilities breaking out. I felt that I was not justified in expressing an

opinion without first consulting the Count, and as I knew that I was to meet him at the house of a mutual friend, Baron T—— the following day, I told him that I would resume the conversation when next we met. I saw Count Beust in the morning, told him what the Duke had said to me, and asked him for his views. He said: 'France will make a terrible mistake if she enters upon a war with Germany under the impression that the Catholicism of Bavaria will induce her to alienate herself from the rest of Germany. She must remember that the war will not be one between Prussia and France, but between Germany and France. The hatred between the two countries is intense. Germany has an old score to wipe out. The moment war is declared the cry will go forth for the united Fatherland, with Alsace and Lorraine as a prize. If M. de Gramont believes that the weak and crazy King of Bavaria, through dislike of Bismarck, has yet strength enough to make the Bavarians hold aloof from Germany in the struggle because their religion is the same as that of France, he is in error. If he has been told so he has been misled, wilfully perhaps, but certainly misled. Should M. de Gramont, under the influence of such an impression, urge a war policy, he will be guilty of a grave fault, the magnitude of which he will only discover when it is too late.' In the evening of that day I met the French Foreign Minister at dinner, and in a *tête-à-tête* in the smoking room I conveyed to him word for word what Count

Beust had told me. He was sceptical as well as optimistic. He had been persuaded that in the event of a Franco-Prussian war Catholic France could look upon Catholic Bavaria as an ally, and he paid no attention to Count Beust's friendly warnings. He saw the enormous advantage of an alliance which would have strengthened France by the accession of the big batallions and sturdy troops of Bavaria, and which would weaken Prussia by the presence of an enemy in the midst of her natural allies. We parted, and I never saw him again until a short time before his death, when our conversation, and the sanguinary events which so soon succeeded it, were not referred to. But I am convinced that this high minded Frenchman, too straightforward to suspect any evil motive, sincerely believed those who told him to rely on the Bavarian alliance, and was only undeceived when it was too late.

The author of 'The Present Position of European Politics' in the *Fortnightly Review* for January 1887, says that 'the Austrian Alliance with France in 1870 lured Napoleon III to his destruction,' and speaks of autograph letters on this subject from the Emperor of Austria and the King of Italy which he believes are in the hands of the Empress Eugénie. I do not know what ground he has for making these statements. As shown above, I was in Vienna just before the war broke out, and what I have related will I think demonstrate that there was

not the remotest intention on the part of the Austrian Chancellor to promise the alliance of Austria to France. The following extract from a letter addressed to me by Count Beust from Altenberg on the 18th January 1873 will be of interest in this connection:

'After all, I am rather satisfied at the result of this miserable dispute. Gramont has rendered me a service, for he has given me an opportunity of proving the falsity of the report that Austria had promised France her alliance. At the same time what he did was very wrong and very stupid; wrong, because even if he had succeeded in his contention, he would only have proved that I was France's best friend, and was only prevented by circumstances from giving her armed support; stupid, for he confesses that in spite of all my so-called promises, no alliance was actually concluded. The whole affair may be resumed in the following words: "De deux choses l'une: ou le Duc de Gramont en 1870 a été dupé—alors le Duc de Gramont en 1873 est ridicule; ou le Duc de Gramont en 1870 ne l'a pas été—alors le Duc de Gramont en 1873 est odieux."'

I may add without indiscretion that in a conversation I had with the Emperor Napoleon at Beaulieu House, Cowes, in the year 1872, in which he discussed very openly the question of alliances before the Franco-German war, he said that the Duc de Gramont's representations had given him the impression that he could count on the alliance of Bavaria, but not on

that of Austria. He did Count Beust the justice to add that he (the Emperor) had never been led by the Count to believe that France would have the alliance of Austria. With regard to the Duc de Gramont, the Emperor's words were: 'M. de Gramont a cru ce que lui a dit M. le Comte Bray' (the Bavarian Minister at Vienna) 'à l' égard d'une alliance Bavaroise en cas d'une guerre Franco-Prussienne.'

XII

Some day, when the real reasons which dictated the policy of France before the Franco-German War are published, I think it will be found that far from France having, as is alleged in the article to which I have referred, been the dupe of Austria, the war would probably never have taken place if the advice of Austria, given through her Prime Minister, had been followed. Just as the participation of France in the Crimean War was urged upon Napoleon III in order to consolidate, by an appeal to the French love of military glory, the new born second Napoleonic empire, so the war with Prussia was recommended by Maréchal Lebœuf and other dangerous advisers for the purpose of rejuvenating that empire by a new bath of blood. In dynastic rather than in national considerations must be sought the real reason for the war of 1870. The mob that shouted 'à Berlin' were assumed to

couple with these words the cry of 'Vive l' Empereur,' in homage to the monarch whose victorious arms were to lead them to that goal of their desires. Republican, Legitimist and Orleanist were to be artificially united in a bond of hatred to the Prussian, and in a longing again to see the French flag, under another Napoleon, wave on the Brandenburger Thor. So precarious was the position of the Emperor at that time, owing far less to his own fault than to the sins of his advisers, that even this brief day-dream of triumph was welcomed as a respite from the inevitable catastrophe. The empire was doomed, and, like a hapless creature in the condemned cell, clung to the chances of any appeal which might possibly prolong its existence. This was the true cause of the war of 1870. The representations made by the Duc de Gramont of a possible Bavarian Alliance may perhaps have expedited the fatal resolution by encouraging false hopesand leading the Emperor to believe in his probable success. But these false hopes were only an incident, and can in no way be considered as the cause of the war. France had, I believe, made up her mind for the conflict, with or without allies. No doubt there are many who imagine that Austria tendered France her active assistance, and they base this idea on the assumption that Count Beust was anxious to give Austria an opportunity of avenging and wiping out the calamitous defeats of 1866. Knowing him well, I can say positively that nothing was further from his

thoughts, for he was essentially German in his political views. But even assuming, for argument's sake, the existence of a baser motive of which he was utterly incapable—namely, a desire for revenge—such a policy would have been suicidal, and entirely at variance with the system which he inaugurated when he assumed the reins of Government in 1866. That system, as I have already explained, was based upon the development of the power of the German element in Austria and the restoration, if possible, of the bond of union between the German Austrians and the rest of Germany which had been destroyed in the Austro-German War. There would have been no sympathy in Austria with the idea of a Franco-Austrian alliance, and I am inclined to believe that if such an alliance had been attempted, the German populations of Bohemia, Moravia and Upper and Lower Austria, might not improbably have taken very active and dangerous measures with the view of co-operating with their German brethren against what they would have deemed the common foe. In such a case the alliance would have existed only in name, for Austria would have had to quell internal rebellions instead of actively participating in the war, and Sedan might have had as disastrous an effect upon Austria as it had upon France. Austria's Prime Minister was too experienced and too patriotic a statesman to have attempted so insane a policy.

XIII

Count Beust possessed a very charming property, about an hour's distance by rail from Vienna, called Altenberg. It stood on the left bank of the Danube in a delightful park, surrounded by high and beautifully wooded hills. The house was a large and comfortable one, of castellated shape, exquisitely furnished with many artistic objects, and full of the souvenirs of a long and eventful life. Here he used to retire for a few days whenever circumstances allowed him to do so. On such occasions he would invite some of his most intimate friends; and those who have been there will never forget the cheery parties where, in the midst of his family circle, with his two sons, Counts Adolph and Henry, the veteran Statesman would cast off the cares of office and relate anecdotes of various Courts and personal reminiscences of sovereigns, interspersing his talk with many a lively epigram and quotation. As in Vienna, numbers of pet dogs, and even cats, roamed about the house in absolute ease and familiarity; and nearly every room had its cage of birds, for, like all kind and humane men, Beust was devotedly fond of animals. On the first floor was a sunny little room, his private study. It was here that he wrote the greater part of the Memoirs which I am now presenting to the public in their

English form, and here he repeated to me the often expressed wish that I should undertake the task upon which I have now ventured. He had for years been engaged in noting down the points of interest in his life, and I was the custodian of the bulky manuscript until a short time before he left the post of Ambassador in Paris, and finally retired from public affairs, when for the first time he found leisure to examine and edit his Memoirs with a view to their publication. He was an excellent husband and affectionate father, and here I may say that both his sons have devoted themselves to the service of the State—the eldest, Count Adolph, being now, I believe, Secretary to the Legation at St Petersburg, and the youngest, Count Henry, occupying a high position in the Austrian Civil Service.

XIV

It is needless here to recapitulate the circumstances which led to Count Beust being relieved of his functions as Imperial Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and to his being appointed Ambassador at the Court of St James's. Intrigue had long been rife against him—

'With fame in just proportion envy grows'—

and he had much to contend with, for Austrian bigotry and feudal aristocratic prejudice had been

scotched but not killed. If, however, there was any post which could compensate him for the loss of the elevated position he had held, it was his appointment as Ambassador in England, for whose people he had such sympathy and affection, and whose Constitution he had endeavoured to imitate in Austria. I saw him in Vienna shortly after the change had been decided on, and what he felt most was the tone of many of the principal Hungarian journals, which, in their delight at the prospect of having a Hungarian, in the person of Count Andrassy, at the head of affairs, forgot the enormous debt of gratitude they owed to his predecessor. He told me how a Hungarian lady had called upon him, and after animadverting in the strongest terms on the ingratitude of her countrymen, put the matter in a homely and very forcible phrase 'Der Ochs vergisst dass es ein Kalb gewesen ist' (the ox forgets that it was once a calf). Considering the immense development of Hungary since Beust's advent to office, the simile was a most appropriate one.

On the 21st December 1871, he was appointed Ambassador in London, and took up his residence at 18 Belgrave Square. From the first moment of his arrival he was overwhelmed with visitors, and he once remarked to me that if he had lost an old home he had found a new one. In decorating his new house he was naturally anxious to adorn the principal room with the portraits of the

Emperor and Empress of Austria. For some reason or another there was considerable delay in their being sent to him. A mutual friend in Vienna was charged with this commission, and when the portraits at last arrived, the Count addressed him the following characteristic letter, of which he gave me a copy, and which I here reproduce :—

18 *Belgrave Square.*

Mon cher ami,—Mille remercîments de votre aimable lettre et de toutes les peines que vous vous êtes données pour ces augustes portraits, qui paraissent avoir eu tant de difficulté à se rapprocher de moi.

Je vous remercie encore de votre bonne amitié pour Adolphe, qui est pour moi un si grand sujet de contentement. Je serais en effet bien heureux de le revoir. Vous voilà donc content et heureux au milieu des contents et heureux, et le premier des devoués.

J'aime assez votre désarmement des haines. Quand on s'est fait arracher une dent on ne se plaint plus, et lorsqu 'un voisin incommode a déménagé, on le laisse tranquille. C'est ordinairement ainsi que les choses se passent dans ce monde.

Ajoutons que le voisin déplacé n'a rien de mieux à faire que de faire en sorte qu'on lui parle le moins possible de son ancienne maison, et qu'il se case le mieux possible dans la nouvelle.

C'est ce que je me suis appliqué à faire, et je crois avec succès. Ma maison est très bien montée : j'ai un excellent cuisinier, mes dîners sont vantés comme bons et comme gais, on m'écrase de politesse dans le

monde, et chaque fois que je parle à un 'public dinner' je suis reçu comme je l'étais à Vienne dans les premières années.

Ces braves gens persistent à s'imaginer que c'est moi qui ai jeté les bases du nouvel ordre de choses en Autriche et que j'ai fait le gros de l'ouvrage. Bref, j'ai beaucoup d'amis nouveaux : peut-être ne vaudront-ils pas mieux que les anciens, mais au moins cela vous change. Il est probable que je serai encore fautif dans les *appréciations*, mais ici cela ne fera pas grand mal. En revanche, je vois déjà poindre les envieux ; ceux-là je ne pourrai pas les empêcher d'arriver, et il est bien possible qu'un beau matin ils me cassent encore le cou. Mais alors il sera temps de se rappeler que l'année 1809, qui, non contente de la bataille de Wagram, a joué à l'Autriche le mauvais tour de me faire naître, est bien loin, et qu'il est temps d'en finir une fois avec la vie publique et de rentrer pour tout de bon dans la vie privée, dont ces bons Autrichiens, je leur rends cette justice, m'ont appris à apprécier les avantages.

Adieu, cher ami, votre bien devoué

BEUST.

There is some degree of bitterness and sarcasm in this letter, especially where he writes of being received in London as he was in Vienna in the first few years of his stay there. But he soon became, so to speak, acclimatised, and it is astonishing with what facility and rapidity he accustomed himself to our English views and institutions. He was continually invited to public dinners, and although he

complained much of the fare, seemed to enjoy proposing or responding to a toast. He took the chair at many of the dinners of the leading charities in London, more especially the German Hospital, the Society of Foreigners in Distress, and the Hungarian Society. On these occasions he always spoke in English with great ease, and in a style far superior to the generality of those post-prandial orations that it is the ill-fortune of most public men to have to make or hear. Hospitable in the extreme, his parties and dinners were renowned in London society, and his ball to the Prince and Princess of Wales was admittedly one of the most successful ever given. I remember the mass of letters which poured in applying for invitations. The Count handed them to me with the request that I should advise him as to the expediency of sending the desired card or not, and added: 'I never knew how popular I was in London till now. I wonder whether my popularity will be as great after the ball.' Two other most charming fêtes which I can recall were the dinners and subsequent receptions he gave in honour of the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria and the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany. These fêtes were not brilliant in the ordinary acceptation of the word, as being almost exclusively composed of what is termed the upper ten thousand; for he followed in London the same principle which he observed in Vienna, and did not make mere birth or rank the passport to

his salon. In the gatherings of which I speak the republic of letters was largely represented; art, science, the drama, politics and the learned professions all found their place, and the brilliant crowd was, as it should be in the house of an enlightened statesman, composed of the notabilities of every class and profession.

XV

In London Count Beust's greatest amusement was to have a quiet evening at home. After a very frugal dinner, he would light the mildest of cigars and work either at diplomatic despatches or correspondence until about half-past twelve, when he usually retired to his bed-room. The following is a typical letter of his, selected from a number written in the same style :—

18 Belgrave Square,
December 13, 1872.

Dear Worms,—Do you remember the Latin proverb of our youth: 'Plenus venter non studet libenter?' This is to say that I think it would be best for us to meet to-morrow, Thursday, at 6 o'clock precisely—we want two hours for business, and afterwards we will try to make a good dinner. For once I will smoke before ten. Most truly yours,

Beust.

On such occasions his custom was to discuss a

subject for a considerable time, and then to ask me either to write down the result in English or to make a *précis* of it in German, which he would afterwards elaborate. His handwriting, like that of other great statesmen, was very difficult to read, and I have letters in my possession which would baffle many experts in the art of deciphering. I have alluded to the fact that he was extremely short-sighted. As a curious illustration of this, I may mention that on one occasion, at a large party in a well-known house in London, I happened to be on the stairs a few steps behind him, and to my surprise he began, without any apparent reason, to bow and make polite gestures to some person whom I could not see, apparently with the object of inducing him to pass first. This continued until I joined the Count on the landing, when I found him in front of a large looking glass. He was evidently under the impression that he was standing at an open doorway and gracefully making way for someone who wished to enter. Luckily I was in time to explain the situation to him. He was much amused and struck with the intelligence of the Shah, as the following extract from one of his letters to me shows :—

18 Belgrave Square,
June 28, 1873.

'People are quite mad here with the Shah. The poor man is prevented from utilising his stay, as he is constantly on the stage. He is evidently a clever

fellow, and he behaved admirably. He was very gracious to me, but a lady told me that at the State Ball he asked her if I was a Scotchman, as I had no stockings on. She then explained to him that flesh-coloured stockings were the fashion. We laughed much at this story.'

Some little time after the above incident, when making a call in London, the lady of the house showed him the Shah's autograph, which was even more illegible than his own. Beust replied 'Qu'est ce qu'on peut attendre d'un Shah' (chat) 'qu'un griffonage?' He paid a short visit to Austria in 1874, and, as this extract from a letter to me will show, no longer found the charm in the Kaiserstadt which so fascinated him in former years :

ALTENBERG,
December 2, 1874.

'My impression as to Vienna may be stated in a few words: everybody is satisfied with himself and dissatisfied with the rest. I regret deeply your absence from London. Mais la santé avant tout, car elle est la base de la bonne humeur, qui est le seul moyen de se moquer des hommes et d'endurer les choses.'

XVI

Count Beust was keenly alive to the fact that a political leader of men, though he must first win their

confidence through their appreciation of his talent and power, can only keep it by establishing a close bond of sympathy with them by personal intercourse, social relations, and a just recognition of their abilities. He once observed, in connection with our English party life, that Lord Beaconsfield's power over the Conservative party from 1874 to 1880 was due as much to this knowledge of the men composing it and their relative value to the party as a whole, as to his own great attributes as a parliamentary leader. 'The fall of a government,' he added, 'is oftener brought about by disaffection among the members of a political party than by the force of a parliamentary opposition.' There are few students of politics who have been engaged actively in public life who would dispute this assertion. Continuing his conversation, he said, 'I think there ought to be free communication between the leader and his followers. When I was Minister in Vienna I always encouraged this. I never allowed difficulties or grievances to filter through official channels before they reached me; but the moment I knew of their existence, I invited those who, rightly or wrongly, felt themselves aggrieved to come to me and discuss matters freely and without reserve, for I considered that there was much truth in the old French adage "Il vaut mieux avoir à faire au bon Dieu qu'avec ses Saints;" and in nine cases out of ten the qualities of the intermediaries are anything but saint-like.' Friendly as Count Beust

always was to every member of his party and to those who worked under him in the great department of State of which he was the head, he was a decided enemy of officialism, and allowed no interference on the part of the permanent officials, 'whose first function (he said) was to carry out instructions, and who ought on no account to confound executive administration with questions of policy'—a very wholesome rule which might with advantage to the State be followed elsewhere than in Austria.

In 1875--76 Count Beust's work was very heavy indeed. The dangers of the Eastern question were daily becoming more serious, and a constant interchange of despatches between the Cabinets of Vienna and St James's taxed his energies and time to the utmost. With the Andrassy Note he was more especially concerned, and I am violating no secret when I say that he attached but little importance to it, and did not believe that it would have any beneficial results. Although he conscientiously represented the views of his Government to our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Derby, he personally did not share them. The real object, in a few words, of the Andrassy Note was to obtain a proper recognition by the Porte of the rights of its Christian subjects, and to guarantee that the necessary reforms with regard to them should be executed, and their property and lives duly protected. The assent of the great powers to the Note (it having

been already accepted by the Porte) was to form an international guarantee that they would insist on these reforms, and the Porte was to be pledged to carry them out. From the Note itself it would seem doubtful whether Count Andrassy's faith in its probable success was very strong. The following are the concluding paragraphs of the document addressed to Count Beust for communication to Lord Derby :—

'Sans doute que par ce moyen les Chrétiens n'obtiendraient pas la forme de garantie qu'ils semblent réclamer en ce moment, mais ils trouveraient une sécurité relative dans le fait même que les réformes octroyées seraient reconnues indispensables par les Puissances, et que la Porte aurait pris envers l'Europe l'engagement de les mettre à execution.

'Telle est la ferme conviction sortie d'un échange d'idées préalable entre les Cabinets d'Autriche-Hongrie, de Russie, et d'Allemagne.

'Votre Excellence est chargée de porter ce point de vue à la connaissance du Cabinet de St James, et d'obtenir son concours à l'œuvre de paix dont tous nos efforts tendent à assurer le succès.

'Si, comme je l'espère, les vues du Gouvernement Anglais se rencontrent avec les nôtres, nous lui proposerions par égard pour la dignité et l'indépendence de la Porte de ne point addresser à celle-ci nos conseils dans une note collective, mais de nous borner à inviter nos Réprésentants à Constantinople à agir conjointement et d'une manière identique auprès

du Gouvernement du Sultan dans le sens que nous venons de développer.

'Vous voudrez bien, M. le Comte, donner lecture de la présente dépêche au Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, et lui en laisser copie; et je vous serais reconnaisant de me faire connaître aussitôt que possible l'impression qu'elle aura faite sur son Excellence.

'Recevez, etc.'

I spent a portion of the winter of 1876 in Egypt, and while there I received a letter from Count Beust of which the following is an extract:—

18 Belgrave Square,
February 1876.

'Dear Worms,—I was most happy to receive your kind letter from the land of the Pharaohs, and I should be still happier if I could join you under a beautiful sky instead of living miserably here in the fogs. . . . . This winter was for me an anxious one, in consequence of the famous Andrassy Note never arriving. I was prevented from going abroad at Christmas. . . . . Then I got a severe cold with a bad cough, and Weber condemned me to remain at home and not to receive anybody. So I spent about a fortnight in my dog's company. At last came the despatch, and I was obliged to run after Derby at Knowsley and to spend three weeks here in making the greatest exertions in order to overcome the reluctance of the English Government to join the other Powers. I succeeded at last, and everybody complimented me here on the victory. But from Vienna

not a word of thanks. I have done my duty—*sapienti sat.* I have supported energetically a policy which I do not quite understand; this was my duty. But how often and how deeply I am sighing for independence you may easily imagine. I leave on Sunday for the Continent, and shall be here again about the 20th of March. I shall go first to Altenberg, and afterwards to Saxony. If you send letters to Vienna they will easily reach me. Ever yours, BEUST.'

The immediate sequel to these interviews was Lord Derby's despatch to Sir Henry Elliot, our Ambassador at Vienna, of the 25th January 1876. In it he says—speaking of the Andrassy Note—'the proposals of that Note do not conflict with the 9th article of the Treaty of Paris. They are in the nature of suggestions or recommendations for adoption by the Porte in its endeavours to put an end to the insurrection, and do not involve any interference in the relations between the Sultan and his subjects, nor in the internal administration of the Empire. . . . . What appears to her Majesty's Government to be essential is that the Porte should act promptly and vigorously in the execution of the reforms, and that the officers appointed to execute them should be men of energy and determination, who will not be deterred by local apathy or prejudices . . . . and who will do their utmost to restore a feeling of security to the Christian population. Unless such

a feeling can be produced, no effectual pacification of the insurgent districts can reasonably be expected.'

Count Beust's view of the Andrassy Note may be briefly summed up thus—that while recognising the necessity of obtaining from Turkey the international pledge that she would do all that was required of her to ameliorate the condition of her Christian subjects, he did not believe that it would have the effect either of staying the spread of the insurrection, or of preventing a dangerous struggle between Russia and the Porte which he foresaw must inevitably ensue. That his views were correct, subsequent events conclusively proved. What he thought of the Austrian occupation of Bosnia is described in the following pithy sentences from a letter which he sent me from Altenberg: —

ALTENBERG, *August* 25, 1878.

'On the 19th I go to Gastein to meet "my friend Bismarck." You know from the newspapers all the details of our Bosnian occupation. Au fait, il y a plus de préoccupation que d'occupation.'

XVII

There was but one feeling in London society—that of general regret—when it was known that he was to leave the Court of St James's and go as Ambassador to Paris. This was in the year 1878. He had long known that there were intrigues going

on for the purpose of ousting him from his new home in England, and what pained him most was that he had the best reason to believe that those who were plotting against him were the very persons to whom, when Prime Minister in Austria and Ambassador in London, he had shewn the greatest kindness. Writing to me from Altenberg on October 1, 1878, he said :—

'I always advocated a close alliance with England, and conveyed to Vienna the expressions of the readiness of the British government to come to an understanding, but was continually hampered by instructions which expressly prevented a formal agreement. I clearly stated that England would preserve peace if she could do so with honour, but that the Cabinet was very decided to go to war if necessary, and had the means to make it. I always got the answer that this seemed doubtful. At the bottom of all this there is an intrigue. I was warned in July, and did not pay any attention to the hint. . . . All was secretly arranged during the Congress and concealed, so that I first heard of it from the newspapers. It was decided at once that I should have Paris, which some years ago I wished for, while now I should have preferred London.'

The Count's brilliant qualities and world-wide reputation soon obtained for him in Paris a position socially as high as that which he enjoyed in London. The salons of the Rue Lascases were thronged, as in

London, with representatives of the best that society could give in wealth, rank, and education, but he still regretted England. Writing to me from Paris on the 28th January, 1879, he says:—'All the charms of Paris do not prevent me from regretting very sincerely my sweet old England.'

XVIII

Count Beust left Paris and gave up his embassy there in 1882. There is no truth in the rumours which were then circulated that the very cordial relations which existed between him and French politicians of all parties had given offence to Prince Bismarck, and that representations had been made in Vienna which led to his recall. I am inclined to believe that his enemies propagated these reports for the express purpose of their being commented on at Berlin and finding their way to Vienna. Mere social gatherings at the Austrian embassy, at which among others Madame Adam and many other distinguished literary and political personages were present, were represented as hot beds of intrigue at which anti-German views were matured. Conscious of doing no wrong, and weary of misrepresentation, the Count preferred relinquishing his high post, and retiring into that position of peaceful ease for which he had so long pined, and which was at last to give him the

opportunity of chronicling his eventful life. He came to London in June 1884, and remained some days visiting old friends and reviving, as he said, pleasant reminiscences. On this occasion he occupied rooms at the Burlington Hotel. His visit was quite unexpected; he was in Paris, and the longing to see London was so strong that he could not resist it. I met him on his arrival, and was greatly shocked at his changed appearance; his eyes, formerly so bright, were dull, his cheery smile had left him, and his face was drawn and greatly aged. He saw that I noticed the sad alteration, and the old merry look lighted up his countenance for a moment as he said: 'Meine Feinde können jetzt zufrieden sein. Was viele Jahre Arbeit im Staats Dienste und grosse Verantwortlichkeit nicht verderben konnte, haben sie endlich mit Lügen und Intriguen unterminirt. Meine gesundheit ist weg. Ich kann mit Wahrheit Sagen: "Der Mohr hat seine Arbeit gethan, der Mohr kann gehen."' (My enemies may be satisfied now. That which years of hard work in the service of the State and grave responsibility could not destroy, they have at last by lies and intrigues succeeded in undermining. My health is broken. I can say with truth: 'The Moor has done his work; the Moor can go.') I shall never forget the painful impression his words made on me, for I knew what truth there was in them, and how ingratitude and calumny had sorely wounded a most upright and sensitive man. As I looked upon his

intellectual pale features, I thought of the lines in Metastasio:

> 'Del buon maestro il venerato aspetto
> Riconosco la guancia scolorita
> Del lungo studio.'

He had several severe attacks of giddiness during his short stay in London, and I advised him to return home without delay. This was the last time I ever saw him. I remained in constant correspondence with him until within a few days of his death, which was most sudden and unexpected, although his health had long been failing. His end occurred in a manner very similar to that of the late Lord Iddesleigh; he was sitting in his chair when he was seized with a fainting fit, and died almost immediately of syncope of the heart.

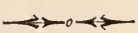
My task is accomplished. I have endeavoured to fulfil the wish my departed friend so often expressed to me—to give to his many English admirers the Memoirs of his life in their own language. I have added my own personal experiences, because I felt not merely that I was doing that which he would have approved, but that I was completing with materials which were in my possession alone the record of a life of historical as well as personal interest. It is an accurate chronicle, derived from letters and notes as well as from personal recollections. It is necessarily abridged, as the events and correspondence of twenty years could not be condensed into an introduction, but

would form a volume of themselves. Moreover, he who attempts to write contemporary history enters upon a most delicate and difficult task, and I have had to omit much that may some day be written when statesmen and others now living are no more. Count Beust's character is best described in three words taken from the letter the Emperor of Austria wrote to him when rewarding him for his great services: 'Treu und unerschrocken'—'True and fearless.'

HENRY DE WORMS.

London, *March* 1887.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE



The events which I narrate in this work reach back to the years of my early youth and childhood, although the thoughts they suggest are the fruit of maturer days. It was originally by no means my intention to write a History of the greater part of the Century in the form of an autobiography. This daring thought only occurred to me when I set myself the task of writing what are commonly called 'Memoirs,' although other names may occasionally be chosen for the same thing.

There may be Memoirs that after their appearance were held to be more full of interest and importance than mine; but I do not think that the world has ever occupied itself so much about Memoirs before their publication, as it has with these volumes.

'You are writing your Memoirs, are you not?' 'When may we hope to see them in print?' These and similar questions have been constantly addressed to me for years. To them and to the demands of newspapers and reviews for extracts, I had to reply that it was my irrevocable decision to let the whole work appear at once, as any other course would give me more annoyance than gratification. Notwithstanding this, several newspapers, without any evil intention, not only announced the immediate publication of the Memoirs, which was not then contemplated, but gave details of their probable contents, stamping them in advance with a character which they did not possess, that of sensational revelations. There was no better means of putting an end to these repeated questionings and rumours, than to proclaim at every opportunity that the Memoirs were to be an historical work in several volumes, extending far beyond the period during which I held office. Thus the belief in the immediate appearance and in the more frivolous than serious character of the Memoirs was dissipated; and I was as good as my word.

Thus much in explanation of the length of the work. With regard to its contents, I can only hope that they are not inferior to the design, and that 'non multa sed multum' may justly be said of them.

I am prepared for objections of various kinds; they will at least assure me of the attention that is bestowed on my undertaking. I am conscious of

having throughout spoken only the strictest truth, of having expressed my convictions, and of having, where individuals were concerned, written without prejudice or malice. Should I be convicted of mistakes, I shall make it my duty to proceed to their rectification. If such should be discovered, they are not the result of carelessness, but of forgetfulness; though, as my friends know, I have a singularly retentive memory, and it has remained faithful to me even to old age.

It will be said that if I have treated of others in an objective spirit, my account of myself is too subjective, in other words, too much tinged with self-praise. My answer is that I have narrated my thoughts and actions. It is for the reader to judge whether what I thought or did was worthy of praise or not. To accuse myself would have been a work of supererogation; my adversaries have completely relieved me from such a task.

Frederick Schlegel said that 'the historian is a prophet who looks back.' If we take this saying literally, it is unmeaning; for he who foretells the future has nothing in common with him who chronicles the past. Yet Schlegel's words have a profound significance. As the voice of the prophet is a rousing and warning voice, so would be the voice of the historian if he received more attention than has usually fallen to the lot of prophets.

I would add a few words in elucidation of two not

unimportant questions which have often been considered with regard to Memoirs—the expediency and the time of their publication. It will not escape a close observer of the events of our memorable century, that the golden rule, according to which he who bears the burthen should also have the advantage ('cujus onera ejusdemque commoda') is rapidly falling into desuetude, in spite of the vaunted principle of equality. I will give one instance of what I mean. In the good old times a statesman who had been at the head of affairs could live unmolested after his resignation, being protected by the censorship. But the censorship has been supplanted by freedom of the press. Now it would be reasonable to suppose that after losing his protection, he would enjoy the advantage of self-defence, especially when his official conduct suffers from misrepresentation, for which the materials are furnished, I do not say by his successors, but by their satellites. If a retired statesman must not speak of what is commonly called an official secret, why should those be allowed to do so who only know it by hearsay, and whose narratives in the public press give rise to judgments calculated to injure not only those concerned, but even the authority of Government itself? Not long ago it happened that after the death of Count Lonyay, a Vienna paper stated that the withdrawal of the Bohemian Fundamental Articles in 1871 was not, as hitherto believed,

owing to me, but to him; and a Pesth paper magnified this assertion by declaring that I had actually been in secret understanding with Count Hohenwart, and had thus been playing a double game. I neither asked nor expected the official press to take up my defence; but I was very far from supposing that it would assume a hostile attitude towards me. This, however, actually happened. I had an interview with the editor of the Vienna paper, in consequence of which he inserted a retractation of the misleading article. Now I am quite insensible to hostile criticism, but not to the distortion of facts. In consequence of this retractation, a bitter attack was made upon me by the chief organ of the Government (the Press department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not involved), in which I was reminded in very uncivil language of the importance of official secrecy, and it was insinuated that I had myself written the article in question. I must by the way remark that the 'official secrecy' in this case was an incident in the Ministerial Council which was not unknown at the time. One of those present spoke, contrary to the general expectation, against the Fundamental Articles, and made a joke on the subject at which the solemn assembly laughed heartily.

The above remarks should not be construed as preparatory to so called 'revelations.' I know how to respect and keep real official secrets; and my own secrets belong to myself. I hope the reader will do

me the justice of admitting that I have not revealed anything that could injure government or country, and that I have written nothing that could compromise anyone.

I bow to those who, in order to fulfil the demands of discretion, carry self-denial so far as to preserve absolute silence; but I cannot applaud their conduct, for it is not only one's own reputation as a statesman that is concerned, but also the authority of Government, which is impaired when the past is imperfectly represented.

In regard to the question of the time of publication I was never in doubt, as I was always of opinion that the dignified and considerate exterior of posthumous Memoirs implies nothing but hidden cowardice. I was obliged by the reasons explained above to give my reminiscences a wider scope than was originally intended, and this, with two dangerous and tedious illnesses, compelled me to delay the publication. But I adhered to my resolution of issuing the work as soon as it was finished.* I of course knew that every year would take away from its interest; but this was not the deciding motive. To publish such a work during

* These Memoirs were sent to press by the Author himself in the spring of 1886. The third part, comprising the period during which he was Ambassador in London and Paris, was not at the time completed, but the Author frequently stated that it would be finished so as to allow the whole work to be issued, at the latest, early in 1887. Unfortunately, frequent attacks of illness prevented him from carrying out his design, and death soon took the pen for ever from his hand. Thus the Memoirs are not absolutely complete, but they include all essentials, especially the two great epochs of the late Count Beust's life when he was Prime Minister, first in Saxony, and afterwards in Austria.

one's lifetime involves many unpleasantnesses and difficulties, which are compensated, however, by the consciousness of being able to defend what one has written. It is natural that the Memoirs of one who is dead should receive a milder judgment than those of one who is living, but I think that a book which has to bear the brunt of criticism requires more literary qualities than one that lays claim to indulgence. I ask the reviewers to look upon these words not as provocative, but as submissive.

Memoirs of Friedrich Ferdinand Count von Beust

PART I—1809-1866

CHAPTER I

1809-1830

BIRTH AND YOUTH.—THE BATTLE OF LEIPZIG.—THE FRENCH OCCUPATION OF SAXONY.—KING FREDERICK AUGUSTUS.—THE UNIVERSITY OF GÖTTINGEN.—MY INTENTION OF BECOMING PROFESSOR, AND MY ENTRY INTO THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE.—THE UNGRATEFUL SON OF THE REVOLUTION.

With what period of my life shall I begin these reminiscences?

I asked myself this question more than once before I could arrive at a decided answer. The most important period, not only to myself, but to others, was the five years during which I had the honour of being Chancellor of the Austrian Empire; I there-

fore dedicated my attention and my pen to those years as soon as I had leisure to do so. By degrees, however, I came to the conclusion that the preceding and longer period during which I held office in Saxony offered, notwithstanding its more restricted scene of action, an equally abundant harvest of instructive lessons and interesting facts, especially as it was not unconnected with the course of events in Austria before my accession to power. But as, from this point of view, my Dresden Ministry may be regarded as preparatory to my Vienna Ministry, so my life up to my tenure of office was not without influence on my subsequent career. I further considered that the fifty-one years of my training for statesmanship supplied me with recollections of more than personal interest. Certain circumstances having forced me, as stated in the Preface to this work, to give my reminiscences a wider scope, I was led by the above train of thought to begin with a date which would really be the beginning of my life—namely, with that of my entrance into the world.

Before I speak of the day on which I first saw the light, I must be allowed to say some words about the family to which I belong, especially as some curious circumstances are connected with it. I have never made a favourite study of genealogy in general or of family-history in particular, but he whose lot it is to be much before the world, is never in want of biographers, and by them my attention has been drawn to some remarkable facts. One of these is that the very ancient family of Beust comes from the Mark of Brandenburg, where its

ancestral seat, Büste, is said to have been in the vicinity of Schönhausen.*

My great-grandfather was a Danish Minister and was raised to the rank of Baron. His younger brother, a Chamberlain of the Palatinate, received in Vienna the dignity of a Count of the Empire, and it was mentioned in the diploma that several of his ancestors had rendered signal service to the House of Hapsburg. Four of them had fallen in the battle of Mühldorf in 1322 while fighting on the Austrian side; another had served with distinction under Montecuculi; and yet another had taken part in the relief of Vienna in 1683. Thus my relations with Prussia and with the Austrian service found a connection with the remotest past. The great-grandson of Baron Beust the Danish Minister, had to show himself very ungrateful to the Crown of Denmark, as I was appointed in the London Conference of 1864 to assume an attitude of decided hostility towards that country.

On the day of my birth something extraordinary happened to me—I was drunk! It came about in this way. I always had the bad habit of keeping people waiting for me. I did so even on that day, and when at last I made my appearance, my father was beside himself with joy, and gave my nurse a dozen bottles of the oldest Rhenish wine of the year 1683. She was a Wendish woman, unable to understand a syllable of German, and thinking that the wine was for a bath, she poured it into a basin and bathed me in it.

The Slavs in Austria have attributed a saying to

* Schönhausen is the seat of the Bismarck family.

me that I never uttered: viz.—'that they should be pushed to the wall;'* but this would only have been a retribution for the injury inflicted upon me by my Slavonic nurse on the first day of my life. I have heard it asserted that I owe my good temper to that immersion in old Rhenish wine. But it is certain that the physical effect was extremely injurious. Not only did a sleep of twenty-four hours give rise to grave fears for my life, but I remained in such a state of morbid excitement as to refuse all solid food for the first few years. This irritability, which I only mastered by degrees, gave me the reputation, as I afterwards heard, of being an unbearable child. To this very day I remember the terror of my parents when my brothers and I, who was then several years of age, were weighed, and my weight was found to be only eighteen pounds. I have never in my life been stout, and have always been considered delicate,† and yet I have seen all but two or three of my school-fellows descend into their graves, some many years ago, while I have attained the age of seventy-seven with undiminished vivacity of mind and body, although it cannot be said that I led a life of easy-going comfort. This result has been brought about chiefly by adhering to my maxim of observing moderation in all things, a rule which I have also borne in mind in politics.

* The origin of this saying was as follows:—The late Minister and Governor of Galicia, Count Goluchowski, always spoke to me in French. It was chiefly owing to his exertions that after I became President of the Ministry in 1867, the Galician Diet unconditionally elected for the Reichsrath. I then said to him: 'Si cela se fait, les Slaves sont mis au pied du mur,' a very different expression from that above quoted.

† Even in the year 1845 a Life Insurance Company made difficulties in granting me a policy. I have since paid it forty annual premiums.

Perhaps the effects of that Bacchanalian bath would have ended more seriously, had not my parents left Dresden, soon after my birth, to pass the summer and winter at Zöpen, a country seat near Leipzig belonging to my father. Here my mother (daughter of the Minister von Carlowitz) who was a distinguished woman of great attainments, presided over the education of her children with a tutor, an excellent man, a candidate in theology of the name of Sturz. His sister was the wife of General von Langenau, who left the service of Saxony for that of Austria in 1813. To this change of residence I owe my ever-vivid recollection of an event of world-wide and historical celebrity; the battle of Leipzig. I was then in my fifth year.

The battle lasted from the 16th to the 18th of October. The days of the week are engraved upon my memory. On Saturday the 16th, Prince Schwarzenberg opened a cannonade close to our house, by which all the panes of glass on the side nearest to the guns were shattered into fragments. I soon grew reconciled to the battle, as we were told that we were to have no lessons during its progress. On the following day, Sunday, I was playing in the yard, when suddenly two officers appeared on horseback. My parents, who were at church with my brothers, were summoned in the greatest haste. The officers were Russians, and they came for worse things than merely to quarter themselves upon us. All the animals that were in the stables—horses, cows, and sheep—were dragged away. I can still see the maids crying as the soldiers were leading off the finest of the cows. The

yard was full of armed men; we had been taken to an attic, from which we could distinctly see the Bashkirs shooting with arrows at our windows. On the third and decisive day, the 18th of October, I remember that a Prussian officer entered and embraced my father with the words: 'The King has come over.' The Saxon troops had gone over to the Allies, too late for the King, too soon for themselves.

In connection with this incident I attach a few historical facts that I learned at a more advanced age. The change of sides above referred to during the battle has been justly condemned from a military point of view, but this condemnation was only expressed later on: if we except the French historians, the mistake was less apparent to contemporary writers. I ventured to say 'too soon' because the fate impending over Saxony remained the same whether the Army were disarmed after the battle or joined the hostile forces. That other effects might result, or that the cause of the King could yet be saved, was the mistaken idea of those who conducted the troops to the Allies. To this we must add the feeling of the country, which was bitterly opposed to the French. The people, otherwise undemonstrative in those days, showed this feeling so openly even before the lost battle, that the Queen said to Napoleon on her arrival at Leipzig: 'Vous nous avez fait perdre ce que nous avions de plus précieux, l'amour de nos sujets.' It has been maintained that Saxony was very French in her sympathies during the Napoleonic régime, but this is not true, nor was it the case even during Napoleon's

highest prosperity. There was indeed a French faction, as always happens in such times, but not only in the ranks of the people and of the bourgeoisie, but also in those of the aristocracy, there was a dislike for the existing state of things. This dislike was fostered by the coarse and insolent manners of Napoleon. My Grandmother Carlowitz, who had spent half her life at Court, told me many stories on this subject: for instance, how Napoleon behaved at a banquet in the palace during his stay at Dresden in 1807. He had the greatest aversion to losing much time at dinner; and though he was seated next to the Queen, he turned round after the third course to the principal chamberlain, who was standing behind him, and said: 'Faites servir les glaces.' When ladies were presented to him, he addressed to them the stereotyped question: 'Avez-vous des enfants? des garçons? faites-en des soldats; des filles? donnez-les à de braves militaires.' My Grandmother also had anecdotes to tell of a later period, when there was no longer an Emperor Napoleon, but a King Louis XVIII: how she was compelled at Court to play cards with Fouché, and how she seemed to perceive the stains of blood on his fingers. In the present day, when so much is said about Republican blunders, partly with justice and partly with exaggeration, it is not uninteresting to remember that Louis XVIII sent to the Court of Dresden a man as Ambassador who had voted for the death of Louis XVI, whose mother was a Saxon Princess. This certainly did not show much delicacy of feeling on his Majesty's part.

For a time the connection with France may have

been agreeable to the Army, which found in the French Marshals greater politeness than was displayed by their sovereign. In the years 1809 and 1812 the Saxon troops had the advantage of fighting with distinction by the side of a victorious army, which had by no means been their lot at Jena. Nevertheless, they were not impervious to the current of German patriotism, as the resignation of Thielmann and Langenau proved; and when the year 1813 arrived, this current naturally acquired greater strength, as the lengthened residence of the King at Prague, and the then expected union with Austria, opened the prospect of a different kind of political action from that which was ultimately adopted, and which has perhaps never been adequately judged.

One of our Zöpen neighbours was Count Senfft-Pilsach, who during the first years of the Empire was Saxon Ambassador in Paris, and subsequently Cabinet-Minister of Saxony. When the events of 1813 took place, he was decidedly in favour of the alliance with Austria, and had accompanied the King to Prague after Napoleon's victory at Lützen. The King returned to Dresden, but Senfft sent in his resignation, and was later on Ambassador at Turin and the Hague, and finally at Munich, in the Austrian service. I met him there after 1840 when I was Saxon Chargé d'Affaires in that city. My mother had been an intimate friend of his late wife, and it was natural that we often spoke of old times. When I was once warmly defending the opinion that the King was wrong in letting himself

be persuaded to return to Dresden, Senfft retorted: 'Do not judge the King too severely. If the battle of Kulm had been lost, negotiations for peace might have ensued the next day; and the battle might easily have been lost had it not been for Vandamme's well-known mistake, and the less known circumstance that Napoleon was attacked by spasm of the bladder after the battle of Dresden, and was unable to speak for hours.'

The importance of these words of Senfft is enhanced by a passage in the memorandum of General von Gersdorff on the course of events in the year 1813, which will be mentioned later on. Napoleon had given orders after the battle of Dresden that a strong column should follow Vandamme to Nollendorf, but had suddenly reversed this order by directing the column's march in the direction of Grossenhain. Much later, indeed only recently, it came to my knowledge that Senfft had left some Memoirs. They were published at Leipzig in 1863 by Veit & Co., and they show that the judgment passed on the unhappy King Frederick Augustus was far too severe. From Senfft's narrative—and he was a staunch partizan of Austria—it appears that the Cabinet of Vienna prevented the King from breaking too precipitately with Napoleon, that it wished him to pursue a procrastinating policy, and that finally his overtures to Russia and Prussia were not only ineffectual, but were absolutely disregarded. All this might have led the King, placed as he was in the most difficult position, to believe that his fate and that of his country were sealed, and that he had more to

expect from France if she were victorious, than from the Allies. It is certain that he was not influenced by such a consideration, but that his affection for his people, which he had proved during a reign of more than fifty years, made the thought intolerable to him that Napoleon might carry out his threat of treating Saxony as a conquered country.

Heinrich von Treitschke observes, in the recently issued third volume of his German History, that the King returned to Dresden of his own accord, so that one might believe that he hastened to do so out of obsequiousness towards Napoleon. He quotes as his authority a memorandum which General von Gersdorff, who preceded the King on that occasion, drew up on the events of 1813, in order to place it before the consulting Ministers at the Congress of Vienna. I know that memorandum. The quotation is correct, but, like all quotations, its true meaning can only be perceived when it is read in connection with what precedes and follows. The memorandum, which contains much of historical value, agrees remarkably with the conclusions to be drawn from Senfft's Memoirs. The King, who had on the one hand the prospect of seeing his country occupied and treated as an enemy, and on the other no guarantee that the victorious Allies would help him to regain it, recognised that under such circumstances his proper place was where Providence had destined him to be: in the midst of his subjects. The hope he entertained of being able to serve the cause of Germany as well as his own, when the war should be over, was, though somewhat optimistic, not utterly devoid of foundation. Dignity and a proper

consideration of his interests required his action to appear as though it were voluntary, and General von Gersdorff was accordingly instructed at once to contradict any intimation that the King had yielded to a threat. Such are the circumstances detailed in the General's memorandum.

I must now return to the years when the events we are discussing took place, and when I was still a child. In the year 1819 Zöpen was sold, and we returned to Dresden, where my eldest brother, who was studying at the Military Academy for the Artillery, died suddenly. In the year 1822 I entered the Kreuzschule, and left it in 1826 at the head of my class. My second brother, who had meanwhile studied at the Academy of Mines at Freiberg, had to go to the University of Göttingen, as it had eminent professors in the branches of study in which he was engaged, and I went there with him at a somewhat early age, having only just completed my seventeenth year. The celebrated Georgia Augusta was then in its zenith; it had 1500 students, of whom 800 were foreigners, that is, non-Hanoverians. I attended Hugo's lectures on Roman Law, Eichhorn's on German Law, Heeren's on History, Bouterweck's on Logic, Sartorius' and Saalfeld's on Politics, and Blumenbach's on Natural History. During the year I was at Göttingen I worked hard. I attended six lectures a day, and made copious notes. That year had a decisive influence on my political views. The connection of Hanover with England, slight though it was politically, developed among the students English ideas and modes of thought, and in this

sense I can truly say that I have been a consistent liberal from my youth upwards. From Göttingen I went to the University of Leipzig. My life there during the first year differed somewhat from my life at Göttingen; I spent more time in fencing-rooms and beer-houses than in attending lectures, which led one of my fellow students (I was enrolled among the Saxons), to remark that 'Beust was becoming a regular good fellow,' thereby implying that I had been irregular before. But the third year made up for lost time. My brother and myself studied hard all day. The tutor came at 6 A.M., and from that hour until 10 P.M. only two hours were allowed for luncheon and exercise. After that year we both passed our law examination in the first class.

The year spent at Göttingen, and above all the brilliant lectures of Sartorius on politics, gave me the thought of taking up the diplomatic career, and I proceeded to Dresden with this object. But there I encountered great difficulties. The then all-powerful Minister, Count Einsiedel, was not favourably disposed towards me; and in my discouragement I determined to adopt a very different profession. I liked the society of Leipzig and disliked that of Dresden. I therefore decided to return to the former city, and become a Professor at the University, in which post I may truly say that my extraordinary memory would have been of great value. But my plans were foiled by the July Revolution, which brought about the disturbances in Saxony and the Minister's dismissal; and shortly after I entered his department as a probationer.

Thus the July Revolution gave me access to the civil service, while the February Revolution paved my way to the Cabinet. When the times of reaction arrived (what they really meant in Saxony I shall explain further on), someone remarked that it could be said of me, as of Napoleon the First, that I was 'the ungrateful son of the Revolution.'

CHAPTER II

1830-1838

THE JULY REVOLUTION. — THE ATTITUDE OF EUROPE. — PRINCE METTERNICH. —MY SERVICES IN DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. —MY FIRST MISSION AT BERLIN.

In one of the last chapters of the second part of my Memoirs, which treats of the session of the Austrian Delegation of 1870, I have praised the deputy Dr Kuranda for having had the courage to remind his party, at a time when everyone indulged in the cheap pleasure of attacking fallen France, how much the German nation and German progress owed to the French events of the years 1789, 1830, and 1848. Thus my own particular fatherland, Saxony, would have had to wait many a long year for the blessings of the constitution of 1831, had there not been a revolution in Paris in 1830.

'What have I done to the people? Have I not left everything as it was?' exclaimed the kind-hearted

and philanthropic King Anthony of Saxony, when the tidings reached Pillnitz of the disturbances that took place in September at Leipzig and Dresden. Saxony had until then clung timorously to the old traditions, but the complete change effected in the views of her people by the French revolution was universal. Even aristocratic circles were not closed against it, although the contest between the old and the new was there most apparent, while in the communal guard, in which I had risen to the rank of officer, the supporters and the opponents of the new order of things discussed the questions of the day without passion. I had already become familiar at Göttingen with liberal ideas, much to the indignation of my aristocratic friends. With some of my university colleagues—one of whom was throughout my life my truest friend, Dr von Weber, who died not long ago as Director of Archives and Privy Councillor—I founded a debating society, and I remember an amusing episode that occurred at the time. The plan of a constitution, which had been placed before the old 'Landstände' for their acceptance, had appeared, and it was natural that we should discuss it. But in our zeal we went so far as to consider the plan not only not liberal enough, but absolutely pernicious, and a protest was at once drawn up for presentation to the very liberal Prime Minister. I, who was then employed in an office of the still existing Cabinet, was entrusted with the duty of presenting this document. We were all at the commencement of our official career, and I retained sufficient presence of mind to recognise the

unseemliness of the proceeding, for which reason I did not hesitate to cast the formidable document into the fire. I soon discovered in the members of my society an anxiety which they were little able to conceal, and which found vent in timid questions as to whether any answer had been received from the Cabinet, to which I replied by confessing what I had done, knowing well what a relief it would be to them to know it.

At the age of twenty-one we are more open to emotions than at the age of thirty-nine, and to that fact I chiefly attribute the different effect produced on me by the Revolution of July and that of February. But even apart from this consideration, it was owing to circumstances that the former possessed a prestige which was wanting to the latter in spite of its more momentous consequences. If Charles X had had thirty thousand instead of three thousand soldiers in Paris, it cannot be doubted that he would have been victorious, and so-called public opinion would have become reconciled to him, as it was later on to Louis Napoleon after the successful Coup d' État. But he was defeated, and defeated after an abortive and brutal violation of the constitution, and his victors had fought with enthusiasm against his tyranny. How totally different was the state of affairs in 1848! What had Louis Philippe done? Nothing, except that he had retained the services of a Minister who had become unpopular, but who was supported by a majority in the Chambers, and that he had lost his head and not known how to give orders in a riot that was the first during his reign. A republican 'par

excellence,' a 'républicain de la veille,' Emanuel Arago, told me when he was my colleague in Berlin in 1848, that early on the 24th of February he and his political friends had no suspicion that the proclamation of the Republic was imminent; but that when he saw on the Place de la Concorde what was going on, how the generals were without orders, and how everything was in utter confusion, he and his friends proceeded to the Palais Bourbon and forced their way into the Chamber of Deputies. I know that behind this almost burlesque 'mise en scène,' ending with the departure of Monarchy in a cab, a far deeper movement was being enacted, which was more of European than of French origin, but which presented for that reason a different appearance from that of the July Revolution. I shall return to this subject when treating of the year 1848, and I shall throw some light on the attitude at that time of Europe, and especially of Austria.

I will here add some remarks on the measures taken by the great Cabinets, and their then unquestioned leader Prince Metternich, against the July Revolution. I need hardly say that these remarks were written in more advanced years, and not when I was a young man of twenty-one.

I became more nearly acquainted with Prince Metternich only during the last years of his life, at which time his son was Ambassador at Dresden, and I preserve the most agreeable and grateful recollections of our intercourse; he could not have spoken more confidentially with Talleyrand, Hardenberg, and Nesselrode than he did with me. Thus I am

conscious of being quite free from any personal prejudice, although my conviction leads me to criticise his policy somewhat sharply. In doing this I must not let myself be deterred by the remembrance of the truly great nature that showed itself in the whole appearance of the illustrious chancellor, as well as in his treatment of men and things.

With regard to the reported saying of Metternich: 'Il est possible que j'ai gouverné quelquefois l'Europe, mais je n'ai jamais gouverné l'Autriche'—I do not know whether it is rightly attributed to him. I have frequently read it; that it would have been sincere, I do not doubt, because that which is commonly called the Metternich system did not in any respect agree with his humane, perhaps too humane, because optimistic views.* But I recognise in that saying the confession of a great sin of omission. It is inconceivable how a man who could say with justice that he sometimes governed Europe, could thus either take so little part in the internal policy of his country or else not be able to exercise decisive influence over it—he who held a dominant position on the Continent, and who could not have overlooked how close was the connection between his influence abroad and the credit of his administration at home. But I do not lay stress on this. I confine myself exclusively to Metternich's action in Europe, and it is there that I recognise his mistakes—mistakes which I condemn, not as an advocate of a different system, but from his own point of view.

* In 1853, a year before his death, the Prince said to me in Dresden: 'Look at the people of Gotha, good, well-meaning people, but bankrupt.' To which I answered in my loudest voice, his deafness having greatly increased: 'Yes, they are bankrupt indeed, but they have credit.'

How often has it been said in modern times that Austria is the empire of improbabilities! At the proper place, in the second part of my Memoirs, I have pointed out that those who most frequently quote that saying, are least justified in making it a reproach. Another saying has often impressed itself upon me. In many periods of the history of Austria one might call it 'the country of contradictions.' Thus we find in the Metternich era constant suspicion and calm indifference flourishing side by side.

The July Revolution was not unforeseen. In the weeks preceding it I was at the Bohemian watering-places when various diplomatists happened to be there, and they often spoke of the impending conflict. The French Minister at Dresden belonged to one of the greatest and oldest families of his country, and was an intimate friend of the Prince de Polignac. In consequence of what he heard at Dresden, he thought himself bound to warn his Government repeatedly against the expected violation of the Charte. Polignac suffered him to do so for a time, but at last warned him that he was in danger of injuring his career. The Minister took the hint, and as soon as the Ordonnances were issued, he wrote a congratulatory despatch. This document fell into the hands of the provisional Government, and then his career indeed came to an end. If Dresden was aware of what was impending, Vienna must have been still more so, and must have been convinced of the truth that the success of the revolution would grievously injure the existing system, which depended on the

principle of legitimacy. Nothing would have been more advisable than a timely understanding with the other great Cabinets, and nothing would have been easier, considering the close and intimate relations in which they then stood to each other. But no! that same Olympian repose was preserved which later on inspired the reply to Radetzky when he asked for reinforcements: 'L'Italie est un mot géographique.'

In the fifth chapter of Metternich's posthumous papers are to be found the despatches which he addressed to the Emperor from Königswart after the outbreak of the July Revolution. We learn from these documents, as well as from preceding letters, that Metternich was prepared for the Coup d'État, and was not against it, but that he had doubts as to the vigour and capacity of those who were to carry it out. I therefore feel only the more justified in venturing to say what I have said about the inactivity and carelessness then prevailing. Nor does my opinion lose in force from the following words in one of the despatches:

'I have just received the enclosed paper from France. Its contents show that revolution in its worst form is victorious in Paris. This fact demonstrates two truths; firstly, that the Ministry was mistaken in its choice of means; secondly, that I was in the right when drawing the attention of the Cabinets for more than two years to the threatening aspect of affairs. Unfortunately my voice was lost in the desert.'

If we find it difficult to conceive how the voice of

Prince Metternich could have been 'lost in the desert' in those days, we are met on the other hand by the question as to what the object of that warning was to have been. It could hardly have been a joint remonstrance in Paris, because it was not the undertaking then contemplated in that city, but its possibly unsuccessful execution, that roused the Chancellor's apprehension. Nor could eventual measures of self-defence have been discussed. The only precaution likely to be successful was not taken—I mean the timely understanding of the Cabinets as to a common and therefore impressive attitude in case 'revolution in its worst form' should break out with its consequent new order of things; and as this eventuality had been foreseen two years previously by Prince Metternich, as he himself said, there was full time for taking the requisite measures.

I made a stay in Paris shortly after the July Revolution, and later on, in the years 1838 to 1841, I was Secretary of Legation there; and I therefore had many opportunities of acquainting myself with what took place before and after that event. The attitude of the Diplomatic Corps was not passive, but vacillating (which was far worse); and it had a decisive influence on the course of events. Among those who were then Ambassadors, several were fully conscious of the importance of the moment, but were prevented from action by the universal want of instructions, to which was added the remarkable circumstance that the representative of the very sovereign who was most opposed from the beginning to the monarchy of Louis Philippe, and who continued so until its

fall, was the least inclined to take any measures, though the initiative fell upon him as the 'Doyen' of the diplomatic body.

There was no telegraphic communication in those days, but special couriers would have sufficed to bring about such unanimity in the representations of the Ambassadors that it would have forced the Duke of Orleans to reflect. Before the days of July, an initiative taken by Austria in this sense would have received the consent and applause of all the other powers except England. But Louis Philippe has in many respects not been placed historically in the proper light. The reproach levelled at him by the Royalists that he conspired against Charles X, who had been his benefactor in spite of the memory of Philippe Egalité, is devoid of truth; but it is true that he could have prevented the dethronement of the elder line, if he had declared firmly and at the right moment to the leaders of the movement, many of whom were intimate with him, that he would not accept the crown if it were taken from Charles X. It is well known that at first it was difficult to persuade him to take over the *Lieutenance Générale*, and to accept the election. Although he was not wanting in personal courage, as he proved in the very serious insurrection of June 1832, still he was not a man to expose himself to unnecessary danger, and the certainty that he would find Europe more than averse to him as King, whereas he would enjoy the confidence of all the Powers as Regent, would not have been without effect. A war undertaken by France to enforce the recogni-

tion of the new Government would not have been probable, and would certainly have been by no means formidable, considering the vast superiority of the opposed forces.

On the other hand, it was wise of Metternich to agree with Berlin in resisting the plan of armed intervention in favour of the dethroned Bourbons, which was demanded in other quarters, as in the most favourable case not much could have been expected from a Restoration carried out for the third time at the point of the bayonet. But what was neither intelligible nor excusable was the neglect to take advantage of an incident which would have warranted the interference of the Powers without aggression, and which would have made France the attacking party if war had ensued. The Belgian Revolution, which then broke out, extended to Luxemburg, a portion of the territory of the Germanic Confederation. In that case immediate intervention would have been justifiable, and the Powers could have occupied not only the Grand-Duchy, but also Belgium, then an integral portion of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Nobody will be inclined to maintain that a measure which would have been supported not merely by Austria, Prussia, and the Confederation, but also by Russia, would have been likely to meet with the resistance of France. Perhaps it will be objected that I have forgotten the Polish Insurrection. By no means. That event took place two months later; and if the above step had been taken, the Russian Army would have been in the Kingdom of Poland before the insurrection was ready to break

out. It is doubtful what turn the affairs of France herself would have taken; but it is certain that the prestige of the system which had been so deeply undermined by the July Revolution would have assumed a very different form from that which it really acquired. I repeat that I do not feel myself called upon to defend that system. From a certain point of view, indeed, every system may be justified, and may claim approval, but only when its execution is consistent and energetic.

I now return to the years when I was still in my twenties.

Next to diplomacy I had also studied Internal Administration, and became 'Assessor' in the 'Landesdirektion.' At the same time I was 'Königlicher Kammerjunker,' and in consequence connected with the Court. This multiplicity of offices procured me my first mission, of which I shall give some details, as they recall the memory of the old Court life of the last century. In the year 1833, the then Prince co-Regent, afterwards King Frederick Augustus, married Princess Maria of Bavaria, twin-sister of the Archduchess Sophia. This event had to be preceded by a solemn proposal of marriage, and I was appointed to accompany the high Court official who was entrusted with the mission. In these times it will scarcely be believed when I say that we took five days to go in a special post-chaise with four horses from Dresden to Munich. My esteemed chief, who travelled in a dress-coat and silk hat, obliging me to do the same, held every morning a sort of reception at which I alone was present, and he insisted on

dinner and supper being served with due slowness and ceremony. On the first day we just managed to arrive at Zwickau, on the second at Bayreuth, on the third at Ratisbon, on the fourth at Landshut, and on the fifth at Munich. One day at Munich I came home late and overslept myself the next morning. When I awoke, I saw my chief before me in his dressing-gown, taking two steps backwards and saying: 'Most serene and most gracious king'—thus using me as a sort of dummy before which he rehearsed his speech. Of this estimable man, who was the very incarnation of etiquette, but who showed me much kindness, I preserve a pleasing recollection, and when I had made my mark as a Minister, I did not disturb his conviction that the foundation of my fortune was laid in that Munich mission. Another reminiscence of Dresden Court life here occurs to me. In the first years after 1830 even at Court old things had somewhat yielded to new; and among other innovations, guests were allowed to appear at the Court balls in trousers. After the marriage above referred to, severer rules were enforced, and knee-breeches were revived. On this subject I once said in the presence of the Court Chamberlain, who was otherwise my friend: 'What a good time that was when we were allowed to appear at Court in trousers!' He flew at me in a towering passion, and said: 'Trousers! I gave you credit for greater attachment to the Royal Family!'

Towards the close of that same year 1833, I undertook a long journey through Switzerland, France, and England, and early in 1836 I entered on

my duties as Secretary of Legation at Berlin, where I remained two years. I hope to prove later on that the accusation of hostility to Prussia which has been so persistently made against me, is most unjust; and it would be difficult to show that it arose from my residence in Berlin, for the social intercourse I there enjoyed was most agreeable, and I may say that I was regretted when I left. My lucky star decreed that in these two years of a very uneventful time, the visit to Berlin of the Dukes of Orleans and Nemours took place, a visit that only passed off favourably owing to the authoritative interference of Frederick William III with his family and society. How many things have changed in that comparatively short time of thirty years! When I think of 1836 and 1866! The King of Prussia fully armed for war, allied against Austria with the last King of Sardinia, who placed himself as King of Italy on the thrones of his exiled fellow sovereigns! And then to reflect on 1836!

In those days Berlin was, almost more than Vienna, the home of the strictest legitimacy. Some French families were to be found there, of very pronounced legitimist views, and on friendly terms with the Court and the Aristocracy. The results of the Belgian Revolution, too, were naturally felt at Berlin more keenly than elsewhere, the Queen of the Netherlands being a sister of Frederick William III, one of his daughters being married to Prince Frederick, and one of his sons to Princess Marianne of the Netherlands. Among the embassies in Berlin none were more the centre of everything that

was legitimist and absolute than that of King Charles Albert of Sardinia. The envoys of Don Carlos, were often to be seen at the Sardinian embassy, and the following occurrence is very characteristic of the régime of Turin at that time. A Count Villette, a young man of high culture and progressive ideas, was then Secretary of Legation to the embassy. He was appointed Chargé d'Affaires during a prolonged leave of absence of his chief, and sent frequent despatches to Turin. These despatches were not read by the Foreign Minister, but the envoy on his return hastened to inform his Government of the dangerous and subversive views of the Secretary. The result was that the latter was recalled and dismissed. The great crime of Count Villette consisted in the fact that he had interested himself in the nature and advantages of the Prusso-German Zollverein, and had even hinted at the advisability of a similar institution for Italy. When the Princess Elizabeth of Saxony married the Duke of Genoa in 1850, I enquired after my old friend Villette of the gentlemen who accompanied the Duke to Dresden. The answer was: 'He is in Parliament, and is a member of the extreme Right.'

And war with Austria! Who could have ventured, I do not say to speak, but even to think of such an eventuality! In those days Vienna did not take hints from Berlin; but nothing took place in Berlin without the knowledge and approval of Prince Metternich, and nobody dreamt of finding in that circumstance anything derogatory to Prussia.

The visit of the French Princes to the Prussian capital makes me revert to the theme, discussed above, of the attitude of the Cabinets towards the Revolution of July. Considering the circumstances which I have just described as existing in Berlin, that visit was a bold move, but successful, thanks to the firmness of the King, and thanks also, as justice compels me to admit, to the discreet and winning manners of the Princes themselves. This good result was in no slight measure brought about by the high position the French Ambassador, M. Bresson, had acquired in the favour of Prince Wittgenstein, who was the King's most intimate friend and his constant partner at whist. But as everywhere else, and even more at Berlin than in other places, French and Belgian diplomacy laboured under the disadvantage of the interdict of Europe, secretly but effectively carried out. As the attitude of the Courts and Cabinets of Europe before and during the July Revolution, was lamentably weak: so after that event it was neither wise nor dignified. Instead of the sword which the Powers neither drew nor wished to draw, they were lavish of their needle-points. The *blocus matrimonial* which was set up against the new French Monarchy was not the only barrier erected, and it merely provoked two results: firstly, the Alliance of the Western Powers, which, as England had honestly accepted the new state of things in France, was inevitable, and which became inconvenient for the interests of the so-called Northern Powers, especially in Belgium, Spain and Portugal; and secondly, the February Revolution, which became

even more inconvenient, and which nothing prepared so effectually as the inadequate position with regard to foreign Powers of the new French Monarchy. It may indeed be safely asserted that the alarms and injuries caused by the Second Empire (to Austria notably) may be traced to the same source; for they resulted from the lesson which the aspiring Emperor of the French had learnt from the history of the patient King of the French.

CHAPTER III

1838-1848

PARIS.—MUNICH.—LONDON.

At the beginning of the year 1838 I was moved from Berlin to Paris, where I remained until 1841.

In those days there were no railways to Paris; and railways have changed Paris very much to its disadvantage. There were only a limited number of strangers, who were chiefly of the distinguished class, whereas now there are shoals of visitors from the provinces and from other countries. In that good old time there were spacious seats in the theatres; and in the restaurants each person had his table to himself. If the difference between past and present is very apparent to the ordinary tourist, it is yet more so to him who seeks society in the French capital. It contains now as then eminent men, and amiable and witty women, but manners are changed, and what gave Parisian life its great charm—the *salons* and

little dinners—has disappeared. English customs have been introduced everywhere. Very late dinners, which make it difficult to go to the theatre; the fashion of returning from the country so late that one has to do without society when one most wants it; residence in town during the hot months, when one is half stifled in the over-crowded and brilliantly lighted rooms (in England they at least open the windows, which are kept rigorously closed in Paris); great dinners of at least twenty-four people; and crowded 'at homes.' In old times the French families seldom received more than six or eight people at dinner, so that all could join in the conversation. The *salon* was not then, as now, a reception where visitors come and go in rapid succession. At the more celebrated *salons*, the entrance to which required more than a mere introduction, the restricted circle met regularly under the auspices of a lady gifted with the necessary accomplishments; and, as at small dinners, with general conversation, *au coin du feu*. Elderly ladies who no longer went into the world held their receptions every evening in the so-called *avant soirée*, and one was certain to find at some of these receptions a person of prominent position. Thus Molé was to be met at the Comtesse Castellane's, Pasquier at the Comtesse Boigne's, Guizot at the Princess Lieven's. Such circles are no longer to be found. That Paris remains nevertheless the most agreeable residence in the world, that one feels keen regret at leaving it, I know from experience. But it may be imagined what an excellent school for refined manners and mental improvement the Paris of those days was.

At the time when I was Secretary of Legation, it was still the custom for the Secretary to have free quarters in the Minister's house. When there were personal differences, this arrangement had its disadvantages, and it has gradually fallen into desuetude. I had the good fortune to be on the best terms with my two chiefs and their families, and can only speak with gratitude of their kindness. In Berlin it was General von Minckwitz, who had formerly been my superior as Minister of Foreign Affairs; in Paris, Privy Councellor Baron Könneritz: they both had very good positions in society, which could not be otherwise than useful to me. The latter especially was a great favourite after a long residence in the French capital. I did not then foresee that his youngest son, a boy a few years old, would one day be my son-in-law and an excellent Minister of Finance.

In other respects, too, I had, as the French say, *de la chance*. I was twice Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, and though it could not be said that there were any negotiations between France and Saxony, my position brought me into direct communication with two Ministers whose names are historical—Marshal Soult and Guizot. I have some recollection of the time when the latter was in office. He took the place of Thiers in 1840, after Louis Philippe, in view of the united attitude of the Great Powers against France, had used the saying uttered later on by Gambetta—'*soumettre ou démettre*'—in the manner of Marshal MacMahon, applying the '*soumettre*' to himself and the '*démettre*' to his Minister. At the time when the song 'They shall not have the free

German Rhine' was written, Thiers opened an unsuccessful Chauvinistic campaign against Germany. Some think the starting-point of this campaign, namely, his policy in the Egyptian Question, was a mistaken one; but this is by no means certain. It was the obvious policy of Russia to maintain Turkey in such a position that she should be in want of protection; but whether those who, like the Cabinets in London and Vienna, wished to see Turkey full of vitality and energy, would not have done better to let things take their course and suffer Mehemet Ali to make himself master of Constantinople, is an open question.

The political excitement then prevalent in Paris was great; the French felt keenly the humiliation they had brought upon themselves, and Guizot, after accepting the Presidency of the Council, did not lie on a bed of roses. I remember having heard it said more than once: *Il en a pour trois semaines.* But the three weeks became seven years. How often that saying recurred to me later on, when I took charge of the Ministry in the excited times of 1849, and was told that it would only last a fortnight, whereas it lasted, not seven years as with Guizot, but seventeen years.

The events which at that time took place in France were in every respect extraordinary. Because Egyptians and Turks were fighting in Asia, Paris had to be fortified; and without awaiting the votes of the Chamber, Thiers had the audacity to cut down the trees in the Bois de Boulogne, so dear to the Parisians. It was almost more extraordinary that when the warlike Minister had resigned and the

pacific Minister had entered office, the latter carried on the fortifications more vigorously than ever, demanding and receiving large concessions from the Chambers for the purpose of surrounding Paris with a number of forts, to which a circular wall, an 'enceinte continue,' had to be added, that it might not appear to the people that Paris was to be bombarded during a riot.

Guizot, a man of the strictest integrity in private matters, had laxer principles when the means of government were in question. I was present when these sarcastic words escaped him: 'Aujourd'hui nous avons gagné cinq convictions.' I met him twice afterwards, first in 1848 after his flight to London, when he wrongly predicted that the Assemblée Nationale, then about to be elected, would be composed of the dregs of all anarchical elements; and secondly in Paris in 1873, shortly before his death. I met the Comte de Paris in his house, and my appearance made the Comte exclaim: 'Here are two Protestants who were formerly the Prime Ministers of two great Catholic countries.'

Some other remarkable events occurred during my stay in Paris. I witnessed the great riot in the month of May 1839, and was within an inch of being shot. 'Do not meddle with what is not your business,' is a wise saying, which I utterly forgot, allowing myself to be led by my curiosity into the midst of the troops and the rioters. I was present at the trial which was held in consequence of the riot before the Chambre des Pairs. I saw Barbès and Blanqui at the bar—that very bar at which Napoleon III appeared the following year after the Boulogne incident.

At the end of 1841, I received my first independent post as Chargé d'Affaires at Munich.

I cannot conclude these reminiscences of Paris without mentioning the Court. Even the adversaries of the Orleans family must own that its members have personally much that is sympathetic and attractive, and have never omitted to do graceful and pleasing things. Thus, although I then occupied a subordinate position, I was invited before my departure to dine with the Royal Family at St Cloud. The King was quite a bourgeois on such occasions, and carved himself, a task to which he was not equal, so that it could perhaps be said of him 'qu'il savait mieux trancher les difficultés que les viandes.' His awkwardness caused an accident to befall me, which was fortunately not attended with any bad consequences. A dish of ham was handed to me, and I took a slice to which another slice was hanging. It fell on the dress of the Queen, next to whom I was seated, but her Majesty did not notice it. I did not lose my presence of mind, and the moment the Queen was looking another way, I made a bold move and seized the slice of ham and put it in my coat pocket. Memorable to me were the last words that Queen Marie Amélie uttered when I told her how sorry I was to leave Paris: 'You will see that you will end your career in Paris,' a prophecy that has been fulfilled.

In Munich more had to be done than merely to observe and to take an interest in the affairs of the country. A great deal of trouble was given me especially by railway matters. The treaty about

the Nürnberg-Leipzig line was already concluded, but its execution at first met with great difficulties in the Bavarian Chamber. Later on there were negotiations about the construction of the Bamberg-Aschaffenburg line, in which Saxony took great interest, in opposition to the Nürnberg-Würzburg line, which was carried out in later years. My Munich residence was coeval with the latter years of the reign of Louis I, who, in spite of his oddities, was a sovereign of marked mental power and decided energy. The Lola Montez episode occurred soon after my departure from the Bavarian capital. Without her, King Louis would not have been forced to abdicate, and if he had remained on the throne in 1848, it is scarcely to be doubted that he, the German Prince 'par excellence,' would have been chosen Emperor at Frankfort, and I am certain that he would not have refused the Imperial crown. A transient but highly interesting period would thus have been added to the annals of the nineteenth century.

During my stay at Munich the régime of the clericals was paramount, and had a representative in the Minister Abel, who had no rival in the Chamber so far as eloquence was concerned. Viale Prelà was the Papal Nuncio. He afterwards became a Cardinal and Nuncio at Vienna, and negotiated the Austrian Concordat with Cardinal Rauscher.

I was on the most friendly terms with Cardinal Viale Prelà, and was vividly reminded of him in Paris by Cardinal Czacki. My predecessor, following the example of his Prussian colleague,

had perhaps meddled too much with the affairs of the Bavarian Protestants, and by so doing instead of benefiting them, only made them feel the ill-temper which was meant for their protectors. I was of opinion that I should do better to abstain from such intervention, unless I should be directed to intervene by my Government, which was not the case. That this attitude disposed Herr Abel favourably towards me was of use to my Government in the railway question, and the friendship of the Nuncio was valuable to me personally. I married at Munich the daughter of the late General Baron von Jordan, who was a Protestant, but whose children were brought up in the religion of their mother, a Countess Sandizell, a Catholic. My bride was a Catholic, and in those days no priest could be found to solemnize a marriage between a Catholic and a Protestant unless a promise were given that the children should be brought up in the Church of Rome. This concession I refused to grant; but I pointed out that the ceremony in the Protestant Church would suffice, as the Catholic Church considered a Protestant marriage as a sacrament, which was proved by the fact that a Catholic could not marry a divorced Protestant. I owe it to my illustrious and reverend patron that my wife's relatives, with few exceptions, yielded to this view, and that I had as witnesses in the Protestant Church, two Protestants and forty Catholics. Twenty years later I had to assist in destroying the work* which the Cardinal had looked upon as the crowning glory of his life, though he himself did not live to see my ingratitude.

* The Concordat.

In 1846 I was appointed Resident Minister in London. England is the country where I passed the greatest part of my career as a diplomatist; two years as Saxon Resident Minister, seven as Austrian Ambassador, and during various intermediate periods as Plenipotentiary of the Germanic Confederation, and on other shorter missions. I can truly say that I have always looked upon England as my second home. Whenever I visit my friends in England (a pleasure I cannot deny myself), my heart rejoices at the sight of Dover. Others have doubtless had a similar experience. Whether it be the magnificent hospitality that one finds in England, or the loyal attachment one meets with, there is a homely feeling about the country which attracts the visitor in spite of the dreary monotony of English life and the lack of amusement.

At the time of my first London mission, two eminent characters were still living: the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. As formerly in Paris, so now in London, I had the good fortune to be present at interesting events. The chief of these was Sir Robert Peel's victory on the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and his defeat on the Irish Coercion Bill which occurred shortly afterwards. When his former supporters brought about this defeat by their union with the Whigs, thus avenging themselves for his having carried the Corn Laws Bill by a similar coalition, he made an eloquent speech, in which he consoled himself for his defeat by the thought that the poor would bless him when they ate their bread. He might have said the same of the *gourmets*, for the duties on wine

were lowered at the same time ; and this, I may add, had the curious effect of reducing the consumption of wine in England. Not unjustly was it then charged against Peel, and the charge has since been revived, that he could have realised his philanthropic views equally well if he had left it to the Liberal Ministry to introduce and carry the Corn Laws Bill, as it was the Liberal vote which enabled it to be passed when he voted for it with his sixty followers, the so-called Peelites. In resolving to attach his name to the measure he caused a split in his party, which has never since been obliterated. From that moment there were no longer any Tories or Whigs, but Conservatives and Liberals. In both quarters opportunism has taken the place of old party traditions.

Soon after my appointment a treaty had for the first time to be negotiated between Saxony and England for the protection of literary copyright, in connection with one concluded by Prussia with special consideration for the Leipzig book-market. Another negotiation with which I was entrusted immediately after related to the postage between England and Saxony. The cost of a letter between the two countries, which is now twenty pfennigs, was then one shilling (ten silbergroschen), and of that sum the Saxon Post Office received one quarter (two-and-a-half silbergroschen). The English Post Office wished to reduce the rate ; Saxony offered no objection, provided the two-and a-half silbergroschen continued to be paid. It required a vast deal of time and trouble before a compromise was effected.

At that time I obtained an insight into a movement, not emanating from the lower but from the upper circles, which was a forerunner of the agitation for German Unity of 1848. In this movement the chief participators were Baron Stockmar, the well-known author of the 'Life of the Prince Consort'; my Prussian colleague, the not less frequently mentioned Chevalier de Bunsen; and finally the Queen's stepbrother, Prince Leiningen, who was in 1848 the first 'Reichs-Minister-President'; and all these grouped themselves round Prince Albert. Their views were decidedly favourable to Prussia, and decidedly hostile to Austria. I have always found the governments of the petty German States and the heads of the mediatised families most strongly in favour of German unity under Prussian supremacy. I do not maintain, as I have heard others maintain, that the motive of these aspirations was the lowering of the position of the German Central States, and especially of the Kingdoms, and their equalisation with the minor territories of the Confederation; but it is certain that this consideration contributed to make the parties concerned favourable to a new formation of Germany.

I do not hesitate to include in my reminiscences slight events that may amuse my reader. I have sometimes been reproached with writing too much, and I hope that it will not be ascribed to self praise when I say that wherever I was accredited, I occupied myself not only with political questions, but also with internal administration; and that I wrote

circumstantial reports on these subjects. Once I wrote a lengthy document on English schools, and two of my colleagues, who had read it at my house, asked permission to take copies of it. After a time they confessed that they had received highly laudatory despatches from home, whereas I had received no acknowledgment from Dresden. I had then a Swedish colleague, a most agreeable companion, but who could not be accused, like myself, of excessive love of writing. He was very fond of looking at my despatches, and occasionally of using them. When the Schleswig-Holstein movement broke out simultaneously with the February Revolution, I of course treated this movement entirely from the German point of view, whereas it is well known that Sweden espoused the cause of Denmark. One morning my colleague came to me in the greatest excitement: 'You have got me into a fine fix! I have just received a letter from my Minister to ask me if I have gone mad!'

I will here add a singular coincidence which occurred in London at the end of 1847. Prince Louis Napoleon took refuge in England after his flight from Ham about the same time as I arrived in London. He had great difficulty in gaining access to aristocratic circles. A new club, the Coventry Club, was founded in 1847, in the same house in Piccadilly which is now occupied by the St James' Club. It was founded for the purpose of receiving foreigners, and especially members of the diplomatic Corps, as paying members—other clubs, like the Travellers' and the Athenæum, receiving foreigners

as visitors only. Prince Louis Napoleon was a candidate for election to the Coventry Club; the French Chargé d'Affaires did his best to prevent the Prince's admission, and he was blackballed by three votes. A year later, almost to the very day, he received six million votes.

CHAPTER IV

1848

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION AND THE YEAR 1848.—MY FIRST BUT IMPERFECT APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER.—I BECOME ENVOY AT BERLIN.

In one of the preceding chapters I have, while explaining the difference between the Revolution of July and that of February, expressed the opinion that the first was of purely French, and the latter far more of European, origin. It would indeed otherwise have been difficult to understand how a King, whose rule was always strictly constitutional (whatever may be said against Guizot's system), could have been dethroned because the police had forbidden some banquets in favour of electoral reform. As to the oft-repeated explanation of internal corruption, it is ridiculous to maintain that such a revolution could have been brought about merely because there were some scandalous trials, and a man of noble birth had murdered his wife. The true date of its commence-

ment is not 1848 but 1847. In that year the feebleness of the great Governments became apparent to the European party of agitation, and from that moment the first trivial cause (such as the Parisian conflict really was) sufficed for the outbreak. The bankruptcy of the Metternich system took place neither at Vienna in the days of March, nor in Paris, but in Switzerland in the previous year. This is not the proper moment to enter into details about the Swiss Constitution, a question which was then very prominent. It is my conviction that Austria and France were right in principle when, relying on Treaties, they regarded the guarantee of neutrality as conditional on the maintenance of the Constitution of the Cantons; though it must be admitted that the Cabinet of Vienna had placed itself above treaties by the annexation of the Free State of Cracow.

That period was the much-extolled era of 'principles'; it might more justly be called 'the era of contradictions.' After the occurrences in Galicia, I will not too severely reproach the Austrian Government for the Cracow Agreement, but it had to be remembered when Austria demanded respect of Treaties from the Swiss, a demand which she was finally obliged to relinquish, not with the firmness of volition, but with the resignation of submission. The course of events has proved how mistaken was her judgment of the political side of the question, which was the only practical one, when she considered the abolition of the old Cantonal Constitution as the starting point of revolutionary movements. After the February Revolution broke out, there were many

disturbances in Germany and Italy ; but Switzerland remained the most quiet of countries. Worse, however, than this error of appreciation were Austria's errors in action. When both France and Austria had encouraged by every possible means the resistance of the Cantons of the Sonderbund (this was done, independently of the language of the Governments, especially through the zeal of their agents, who belonged to the clerical party), the threat of armed intervention, on which the Sonderbund party had the right to rely, ended in the powers merely allowing things to take their course. Vienna explained this conduct by saying that there was no certainty of French co-operation. Paris had, in a reversed sense, the same excuse, although the French entertained the liveliest sympathy for the Sonderbund. 'It is impossible that we can allow so iniquitous, odious and brutal an act to be accomplished,' said to me the old Duc de Broglie, then French Ambassador in London.

I by no means overlook the influential part played by the Spanish Marriages and the rancour of Lord Palmerston, but here we distinctly see the weakness of a system that can be disturbed by such accidents.

The recognition by the Revolutionary Party of the weakness of the European Powers had the natural consequence that the February Revolution operated everywhere like an explosive.

If we read German histories, as for instance the well-written and attractive 'Thirty Years of German History' by Biedermann, we are led to believe that the German rising of 1848 was of purely German

origin and a purely German act. But had Louis Philippe preserved his old energy of mind, which was not the case (as I was able to convince myself during a visit I paid him at Claremont shortly after his exile), and if his two sons in the Army and Navy, d'Aumale and de Joinville, had been in Paris at the time, the February Revolution would only have been another riot, and Thiers would probably have returned to office. That in this case the German movement would have succeeded in convening a Parliament and a National Assembly was hardly probable, considering the description Biedermann gives of the feeling at Berlin during and after the session of the united Landtag. The movement in Hungary and Italy, as in Germany, began in 1847, and originated in the above-mentioned notorious fiasco of the great Cabinets; after an energetic repression of the Parisian insurrection, it would indeed not have dwindled away, but would have proceeded more leisurely, though less progressively. I will here refute in advance the possible inference that I am personally averse to the present development of Germany. I am wanting neither in admiration of what has been performed, nor in a sense of the defects of former times; but this will not deter me from calling things by their right names, and from opposing unjust depreciation and condemnation of the past.

In Saxony, where the insurrection broke out early in March, it was perhaps less surprising than elsewhere. A few years before, disturbances had taken place at Leipzig, which were followed by armed intervention of not unquestionable necessity, but of very

questionable opportuneness. Victims had fallen, and Robert Blum appeared for the first time as a popular orator. The traces of those days were not obliterated when the French catastrophe occurred. From Leipzig arose the agitation for the dismissal of the Ministry, whose members were not only honourable men, but each eminent in his branch, and of high authority. Their policy could not be called absolutely illiberal; it was only stationary. But new men were wanted for new policies.

It was in the middle of March that I received a letter from my superior, Minister von Zeschau, in which he asked me to come to Dresden without delay, as the King was going to entrust me with the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Ministers had considered it their duty to send in their resignations, and King Frederick Augustus accepted them with a heavy heart. The new Ministry was a radical one, such as then existed in all the German States. Two prominent members of the Second Chamber, Braun, a lawyer, and Georgi, a manufacturer, were appointed Ministers of Justice and Finance respectively; and von der Pfordten, then Professor of Roman Law and Rector of the University of Leipzig, was appointed Minister of the Interior. The King wished to place the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in experienced hands, to which the others agreed. I immediately made preparations for my departure, and in the confusion I was robbed of the few Orders I then possessed and of my dress coats, which, in those revolutionary days, made me quite fitted for my new position. I did not let myself be detained by a storm that lengthened the

passage from Dover to Ostend by three hours; I travelled night and day; and on my arrival in Dresden, I was received by an official of the 'Ministerratskanzlei,' with whom I was personally acquainted. He came, however, not to welcome me as his chief, but with a request that I should not show myself in the town.

While I was on my way, the events of the 18th of March had taken place in Berlin. This completely changed the situation; the Ministry required, instead of myself, a popular man of tried radical opinions; and thus Pfordten exchanged the Ministry of the Interior for that of Public Worship and Instruction in connection with that of Foreign Affairs. Stadtrath Oberländer of Zwickau, who was appointed Minister of the Interior, was a thoroughly honest and far from fanatical Democrat; but he was weak, and entirely in the hands of the extreme party. It was chiefly owing to him that in the course of a year a whole network of ultra-Democratic Clubs was spread over the country. These clubs, the so-called 'Vaterlandsvereine,' furnished the contingent for the Insurrection of May 1849. Had the first arrangement been preserved—had I been nominated Minister in 1848, and had Oberländer not been admitted into the Cabinet—affairs would have assumed a different aspect. The Insurrection of May would probably not have taken place, and affairs in Saxony would have developed themselves as in Hanover under Bennigsen and Stüve. Pfordten, who was at heart a Conservative, would have found support in me, and he would have carried Braun and Georgi with him. The public mind in

Saxony, and not only in reactionary circles, was of opinion, after the Insurrection of May, that things had happened for the best, and that a thorough overhauling was essential. Much was to be said for this view, but it was lamentable that the revolution was not only accompanied by bloodshed, but by the ruin of many families, through the direct or indirect participation of officials, schoolmasters, and even clergymen, who had been misled into taking part in it.

I return to the days of March 1848. There was a feeling in Dresden that I was entitled to some sort of compensation for my precipitate and useless journey, and a vacancy which had just occurred in the Berlin Embassy seemed to afford an opportunity of doing this. But I was not sent there until May, and meanwhile I returned to London for a short time. As the Government did not wish to give up the English Embassy, nor to appoint anyone else to it, I remained still accredited to that post; and, alluding to my double appointment at London and Berlin, Lord Palmerston gave me the name of 'the Colossus of Rhodes.'

I shall never forget my impressions when I returned to London. After I had heard of nothing day by day and week by week but national uprisings, marching with the times, rupture with the past, sovereignty of the people, etc., I found everything in London precisely as I had left it, and the season progressing in all the wonted splendours of aristocratic luxury.

The Queen was then at Osborne, in the Isle of Wight, and I received an invitation to go there for

two days. Prince Albert, who was at that time more favourable to me than later on, when I became too strong a champion of the Minor States of Germany to suit his views, was highly interested in my narrative of my Dresden journey and of all I had seen in Germany. This interest is easily explained by what I have said in the preceding chapter on the Prince's activity in German affairs. His Royal Highness showed me in confidence a paper he had drawn up on the best form to be given to the Germanic Confederation. His views nearly agreed with the constitution voted later on at Frankfort, but still more with the 'Drei-Königs-Verfassung' or 'Fürsten-Collegium' of Berlin. Although I refrained from saying anything on the Imperial question, I did not alienate the sympathies of my illustrious host, and I was afterwards informed, on the best authority, that the Prince had suggested at Frankfort my nomination as German Ambassador in London, in case Bunsen, as he hoped, should be appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs at Berlin.

I returned to Saxony *viâ* Frankfort, where I wished to see the new aspect of affairs. The sittings had shortly before commenced in the Paulskirche. The Bundestag was still in existence, though its composition had been modified in accordance with the wants of the time. The Prussian Minister to the Bundestag was an old colleague of mine at Göttingen, Count Usedom, who has often been named since, and who was again Minister when the Bundestag was revived. In spite of our differences in politics, I

must give him the praise of always having been impartial in his judgment. He remarked with truth when he met me again in London after 1870: 'I have repeatedly said in Berlin whenever your name was mentioned: "You always forget one thing, the man has no venom."' This was certainly true, as all who know me can testify. It is a pity that in the very place where he uttered these words, people were frequently of a contrary opinion, and would have preferred to apply to me the saying: 'Morte la bête, mort le venin.'

The Saxon envoy to the Bundestag was, to my surprise, the Burgomaster of a small town in the Voigtland, who had suddenly been invested with the dignity of a Councillor of Legation, and who had been very quarrelsome as a Deputy. A year afterwards he became member of the Provisional Government of the May Insurrection, after the suppression of which he escaped.

When at Frankfort, I always stayed at the Hotel de Russie: and as I was going out the morning after my arrival, the well-known porter advanced towards me, not bowing as usual, but with his hat on. 'Do you want to go to the National Assembly?' he asked in a condescending tone. 'They are going to vote to-day whether there will be a Monarchy or a Republic. But I think you had better put on the National cockade. I will give you one.'

There was no vote as to Monarchy or Republic, but the man's advice was good, for without a cockade I should have attracted unpleasant notice, and in the gallery I perceived several well-known, highly

reactionary 'ci-devants' adorned with most conspicuous specimens of this Republican emblem.

This was the only time that I was present at a sitting in the Paulskirche. There was nothing like an interesting debate, as at that time no member was allowed to speak for more than ten minutes.

I was strongly impressed by the appearance of Heinrich von Gagern, the President of the Assembly. I have seen many Presidents of Chambers in the performance of their functions, but none, not even Gambetta, made so favourable an impression upon me as von Gagern. In those days he seemed destined to have a great future before him. If anybody had then foretold that we should meet again, I as Chancellor of the Austrian Empire, he as envoy of the Grand Duchy of Hesse! He was only to be praised for knowing how to adapt himself to this insignificant position without betraying a recollection of his former importance. Still, he preserved certain habits from the days of his presidency. If he applied to me for information, he always did so in set questions.

After a short stay at Dresden, I repaired to my new post at Berlin, where I remained until I entered the Ministry in the beginning of 1849.

Impressed as I had been by the contrast which I found between the state of England and that of the continent, I was much more struck by the contrast between the Berlin of 1848 and the Berlin of previous years. Greater still, and almost overpowering, is the gulf that divides the Berlin of 1848 from the Berlin of 1871.

Imagine my feelings when I, who remembered the Berlin of Frederick William III, saw for the first time after leaving my hotel, in front of the Palace of the Prince of Prussia, not indeed the inscription 'National Property,' but a member of the 'Civic Guard,' without uniform, acting as sentinel. At the corners of all the streets there were democratic placards, more or less of a revolutionary nature, and the more moderate ones scrawled over with epitaphs such as 'Reactionary Blackguard.' Boys were selling pamphlets, which were not only politically insolent, but often very indecent.

At night the streets were filled by itinerant meetings and inquisitive loungers. Soon after my arrival, my new French colleague, the first envoy of the Republic, came to Berlin. It was Emanuel Arago, son of the celebrated Arago. Nine years earlier I had heard him plead before the Cour des Pairs in defence of Armand Barbès, the chief instigator of the revolt of May. He had printed on his cards: 'Arago, Réprésentant du Peuple, Ministre de France.' It was a clever step of Lamartine's to send to Berlin the son of a man who had been for many years an intimate friend of Alexander von Humboldt, which circumstance procured him a benevolent, almost a brilliant reception from Frederick William IV. I saw a great deal of him at Berlin, and I met him again in Paris when he was Ambassador at Berne. He sent in his resignation immediately after the election of Prince Louis Napoleon as President.

Arago had ordered apartments in the Hotel de

Rome, Unter den Linden, and his arrival was expected in the evening by a large crowd desirous of welcoming him. I happened just then to be walking past the house with Count Heinrich Pourtalès, who was in the artillery, and we were speaking French, which language always came easiest to Pourtalès, who was a native of Neufchatel. Arago had just arrived, and a man in the crowd said to me: 'Now he will be received by a deputation, and somebody must address him who speaks the language. You speak French, go up.' I was required to welcome the representative of the French Republic in the name of the people of Berlin! How quickly I disappeared may be easily imagined.

But more serious things occurred.

The Prussian National Assembly held its sittings in the Academy of Music, and it happened one day that Deputies were insulted and attacked on leaving the building. This also happened to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. When military, or at least police, protection, was demanded for the Deputies, some of them objected. The well known Dr Jacobi was of opinion that a friendly remonstrance would suffice. A then equally well known 'Assessor' said these insults were a gratifying symptom of public interest, and I still hear the words: 'It would be a pity if it were otherwise.' In such circumstances alone could an event be explained, the possibility of which would scarcely be believed nowadays. The Arsenal was plundered, not by a riotous crowd, but as a sort of 'Intermezzo' by way of amusement. I stood some hundred yards off, when a shabbily-dressed man came

up to me with the words: 'Would you like to have a cartridge?'

Several of my colleagues had taken up their abode at Potsdam, where the King and Queen were residing, and I was thinking all night whether I had not better follow their example. But the following days went off as if nothing had happened. It cannot be said that the 'mad year' was not sometimes entertaining. The summer went off in Berlin quite agreeably.

The Ministers (who were changed almost every month) were to be found in the Café Royal or at Jagor's, where affairs could be discussed during dinner; then one went to the 'Zelten,' where there was a popular meeting, and where one could hear plenty of nonsense, and on coming home after dark there was almost daily an innocent little riot. It must be confessed that a certain moral anarchy made its appearance in a mild form. This showed the real hollowness of the movement. The observations that I was enabled to make in Berlin in this respect, were not lost upon me when I advised resistance before the May insurrection broke out.

In those days of discouragement the hopes, not only of the so-called Reactionists, but of all who loved peace and order, were directed to Austria. The tidings of Radetzky's successes were devoured as if they had been Prussian victories, and his entry into Milan was received more joyously than the taking of the Dannewirke. Wrangel entered Berlin, without drawing his sword or meeting with resistance, after Windischgrätz had become master of Vienna. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Berlin soon came to an

understanding with that of Vienna on the German question; but this result was obtained less in the spirit of adhesion than of exclusion.

One of my most remarkable recollections is connected with the last days of 1848, when I first met Prince Bismarck. I was acquainted with Herr von Savigny, who was afterwards envoy at Dresden. His house was close to my residence in the Wilhelmstrasse. One morning, when I went to see him, he said: 'I have a visitor in the house, Herr von Bismarck, of whose doings in the Landtag you must have heard.' Immediately afterwards Bismarck entered in his dressing-gown, smoking a long pipe. Our conversation turned upon the news which had just been received that Robert Blum had been shot. I expressed the opinion that from an Austrian point of view this was a political mistake. I still hold that opinion at the present moment. It happened in this way:—Prince Windischgrätz, of whom Blum's companions would gladly have made a second Tilly, and with whom I became more acquainted by frequently meeting him at Gastein, was a strict soldier, but a humane man. He told me himself that it was not his intention to have Blum executed, but that he was obliged to apply at Olmütz for orders. As he was very imperfectly acquainted with Blum's and Fröbel's antecedents, enquiries were made of a person who chanced to be present, and who was conversant with German affairs, and especially with those of Saxony. This person said that Blum was very dangerous, and Fröbel not at all so; whereupon orders were issued to carry out the sentence on Blum, and to let

Fröbel escape. This step was probably also prompted by the idea that an example must be made—the old Austrian practice, which I have repeatedly censured elsewhere, of taking on one's self the odium of choosing a scapegoat. Whether Blum was guilty (which he certainly would have been regarded by a Court-martial), was politically of slight consequence to Austria; but it was only the more important as regards the further course of events at Frankfort. After having left an Archduke in that city as Viceroy, and the Austrian Deputies in the German Parliament, it was necessary to consider, quite independently of the doubtful question of immunity, what the counter-effect would be on a portion of the National Assembly.* It is not free from doubt whether, had that incident not taken place, the voting on the Imperial question would have been the same; and it should not be forgotten that King Frederick William IV rejected the Imperial Crown because it was offered by those who had no right to dispose of it, notwithstanding which he held that the offer gave him a claim to the crown. This idea of a claim has since that time never been relinquished.

When I expressed the opinion that Blum's execution was politically a mistake, Bismarck at once interrupted me with the words: 'You are quite wrong: if I have an enemy in my power, I must destroy him.' I have remembered this saying more than once.

* It may be objected that the shooting of Trützschler did not injure Prussia much. To this my answer is that Blum was shot in 1848, and Trützschler in 1849 when the period of reaction was in full swing, and when there was no longer a National Assembly.

CHAPTER V

1849

RESIGNATION OF THE SAXON MINISTRY—MY SECOND APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER.

Meanwhile in Saxony the March Ministry was, to use a trivial expression, played out. A new electoral law, framed on the broadest democratic basis, brought together, with the active aid of the 'Vaterlandsvereine,' a Landtag which was called, not by a Government paper or a reactionist, but by the masses of the people, 'the senseless Landtag.' From the very beginning of the session the Ministry was forced to recognize that it could no longer remain in power, and the question of the publication of the 'Frankfort Fundamental Rights of the German People' offered a welcome opportunity for a decent resignation.

The King's position now became extremely difficult and serious. A dissolution, with the hope of a

different result of the elections, was not to be thought of, while the King naturally hesitated to nominate a Ministry from among the chief members of the existing Landtag ; not only his ordinary counsellors, but even ex-Ministers, were against such a measure. Consequently, a so-called Ministry of officials was decided upon. Dr Held was appointed Minister of Justice and President of the Cabinet, Herr von Ehrenstein Minister of Finance, and Colonel Rabenhorst Minister of War. I was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs.

After all that I have said, I need scarcely remark that in those days an appointment as Minister was far from attractive. In truth, it cost me no slight self-denial to accept office. I relinquished a post which only afforded me interesting occupation and agreeable social intercourse, for in those days there were no quarrels with Berlin, and I was well-known there from my former residence. On the other hand, there was a prospect of the abolition of the Embassies to Foreign States—though not to German ones, and least of all of that at Berlin. But by accepting the portfolio, I should be placed before the alternative either of returning in a short time, with the discredit of a lamentable fiasco, to my former post, or else—if my position became firmer and I were condemned to a longer, though not permanent tenure of office—of appointing some other person to my Berlin post. Considering the fact that my nomination as Minister was then regarded only as a question of time, many people had warned me not to accept it, saying that I would thereby compromise

my future without the certainty of being useful to my king and country.

But if I had not accepted, the King would have been compelled to appoint the very men who constituted the Revolutionary Government of May, or else their partisans. 'I would gladly have spared you,' he said to me; 'but I did not know how to escape my difficulties in any other way.' After this I accepted without hesitation.

King Frederick Augustus was a sovereign of noble mind and lofty sentiments. Like all the princes of his family, he was opposed to measures merely aiming at popularity and to all demonstrations in that sense, and yet the country recognised in him, long before he assumed the reins of Government as co-Regent, a friend of liberal views in accordance with the spirit of the time. After the outbreak of the movement of 1830, he could only prevent his being proclaimed king by stating decisively that if such a step were taken, he would leave his country, never to return. I was more than once a witness of his enthusiastic reception in the ranks of the Communal Guard. He was long looked upon with suspicion at Vienna, Berlin, and especially at St Petersburg. In later years his views became more moderate, and he assumed a 'correct' attitude, which was then regarded as a proof of ability. But he never became a reactionist. He had a taste for everything conducive to mental progress, and his favourite amusement was the study of botany. Like his successor, he never forgot that, although himself a Catholic, he was the ruler of a Protestant country.

The opera of the 'Huguenots' was allowed to appear at Dresden without objection, while at Munich the title had to be altered to 'the Anglicans' and 'the Puritans,' which almost gave rise to a protest on the part of the British Minister. The Court was present at the first performance from the beginning to the end, and I was struck by the almost devotional attitude in which the King listened to the melody of 'Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott.'

During the five years when I served him as Minister, that is, until his death, I not only enjoyed his full confidence, but I also gained his affection more than others.

It was no merit on my part not to abuse my position; but it was really a very independent one. King Frederick Augustus was in a high degree a man of sentiment; his bitter experiences after the May Insurrection depressed him for the remainder of his days. He thought he had closed his account with life; and although the last years of his reign turned out to be more prosperous than many previous ones, they found him less sympathetic than formerly. The examination of his body after death showed that had he not died suddenly from the effects of a fall, he might have been struck down by a serious mental disease.

It was not difficult for me to make a sacrifice for so noble a master; but I am of opinion that the country benefited, not because it had me as a Minister, but because, if the Ministerial combination to which I belonged had not come about, events would have assumed a much more unfavourable shape. I shall

refer to this in my next chapter. My nomination was a pledge of support from the upper spheres, and without this pledge the other Ministers would scarcely have accepted office.

CHAPTER VI

1849

THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION AND THE MAY INSURRECTION.

The Frankfort Parliament had meanwhile passed the National Constitution with the King of Prussia as Emperor, and I need not mention that it was accepted by the Saxon Chambers without difficulty. But voices were not wanting to protest against this solution of the Imperial question; it was especially one of the Triumvirs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of May, Tschirner, who declared himself against the exclusion of Austria. In the second Chamber the reporter of Committees was Dr Schaffrath, himself a member of the National Assembly, a fervent champion of the Left even before 1848, and in later times, with more moderate views, President of the Second Chamber. The words with which he opened his speech—'Finis Saxoniæ'—made a deep impression upon me; and I reminded people of them when the

'National-Verein' was bearing its first fruits after the Italian Campaign, so disastrous to Austria. It is incredible how the terms 'Parlamentarismus,' 'Kleinstaaterei,' and 'un-German views,' were then abused, as they are still.

I must here allude to that which I said in a previous chapter; that it is quite false to credit me with an aversion to the present political organisation of Germany. I am as far from entertaining such a sentiment as from the belief that former circumstances may return. More than once I have said that the events of 1866 and 1870 are to be compared to volcanic eruptions. Where the fragments of earth fall, there they lie. But that does not prevent the necessity of judging the past without passion. If a man, who was neither a reactionist nor an adherent of the Minor States, but precisely the reverse of both, called that national constitution, in the solemn tones of a funeral oration, 'the end of Saxony,' how could any reflecting person wonder that he whom the King of Saxony had summoned to guide the State in stormy times, did not precipitate its burial, but did his best as a conscientious Minister to save what he could for his country—which had been no mean member of the Germanic Confederation—while not opposing that German Unity which was looming in the future? I may be accused of much, but certainly not of one thing: I have never been one of those who shirk difficulties and choose the easiest path. I could not entertain the audacious thought that the voice of Saxony would be of decisive influence; but considering the exclusion of Austria on the one hand, and the

rejection of the Imperial Crown by the King of Prussia on the other, I held the demand for the recognition of the National Constitution to be inopportune and premature. Nor was I shaken in this view either by the recognition of other German States, or by the signs of a more serious movement in my own.

The point of view from which I looked on German affairs, and to which I firmly adhered until the decisive year 1866, I expressed more than once in the Chamber during the debates. Thus I said in the Landtag of 1849 to 1850: 'Monarchy can bear the greatest restrictions in internal affairs, but not in foreign affairs without the deepest injury.' In the Landtag of 1861 I spoke as follows:

'It is now not a question of timid anxiety as to the continued existence of the various Governments; it is still less a question of dislike on principle of a preponderating Power in Germany. You will find all the Governments of the larger German States convinced that States of their importance can exist and flourish if they subordinate themselves to a Confederation in which they have a share in proportion to their greatness; but that subordination to a more powerful State, to which they would have to render implicit obedience, would very seriously diminish their prospect of further existence, and that their incorporation into one State would be inevitable.'

I derive sincere pleasure from the fact that my beloved Saxony has passed through the transformation without suffering in a marked degree from

the results I anticipated. This was made possible by the happy chance of individual influence, to say nothing of the circumstance that the constitution of the present German Empire assigned to the separate States a far more acceptable position than the Constitution of Frankfort. The moderate and kind manner in which the Emperor exercises his power, on the one hand—the eminent position of the King of Saxony as a German General on the other—contributed powerfully to maintain the old relations between sovereign and people. The wisdom of Prince Bismarck may also claim its share in this treatment of new circumstances. I do not doubt that he was inspired by noble and unselfish motives; but he has too deep a knowledge of men and things not to be aware that one of the elements that most contributed to urge on German Unity, was the democratic, if not the republican, which started with the idea that it is more difficult to get rid of many royal houses than of one. If Prince Bismarck is solicitous to preserve the vitality of the separate States, this solicitude will be as valuable to the safety and the future of Germany as the pacific alliances which he has concluded.

But I must return to the days of May 1849. Although I had strong reasons for declaring myself against a precipitate acceptance of the National Constitution, it may be asserted that Saxony's recognition would not have brought it into force, and I might thereby have avoided rebellion, bloodshed, and Prussian assistance. This, however, was certainly not the case. Instead of an insurrection lasting only

six days, Saxony would have had, like Baden, a revolution lasting for weeks; and would have experienced, like Baden, the mortification of seeing her Army dissolved.

The May Insurrection was not a rising of the worthy citizens of Dresden against the authorities, but an outburst which had long been instigated and prepared by foreign revolutionists—Bakunin for instance. The refusal to recognise the national constitution made the bomb burst before its time; which was a blessing, not only for Saxony, but for all Germany. Prussia would have been equal to the task, but after much greater efforts and sacrifices; for a rising in the centre of Germany, which would probably have spread, would not have been put down so easily as the Revolution in Baden. The Saxon troops behaved during the conflicts of May so admirably that their conduct is above all praise; but we must not expect impossibilities even from the best, nor must we demand inflexible resistance when we ourselves are yielding. On the 4th of May, when the King and his Ministers left Dresden, several regrettable occurrences took place, and I cannot forget a scene I witnessed in the evening in the 'Blockhaus.' An officer of recognised merit, the son of a high official, entered with the words: 'I report myself as a deserter.' He was ordered to go to the barracks, and to wait for what would follow. An hour afterwards he shot himself.

Even in Berlin people shared my opinion as above stated, and when I repaired to the Prussian capital immediately after the insurrection, I was received

not as one who had been saved, but as one who had saved others.

In the refusal to acknowledge the National Constitution, I was only supported by the Minister of War. The three other Ministers sent in their resignations, but the King decided on accepting my view. Then the task devolved upon me of finding other Ministers. It was not an easy one, for though I applied to many persons, nearly all answered in the negative. More than one who refused, repented his refusal bitterly at a later period. Only one man gave me a decided answer, and the King could not have made a better choice even in quiet times. This was Dr Zschinski, a man deeply versed in the law, and firm and honest in action. To facilitate his acceptance, I made a sacrifice which, as I found in later years, was not slight. I gave up to him the Presidency of the Cabinet which should have been mine. But we continued excellent friends, in spite of occasional differences, until his death in 1858.

The days of May began on Thursday, the third of the month, a date I shall never forget. I left my house in the morning, not to return to it until the ninth. The Ministers passed the day and night in the Royal Palace, where the offices of the Ministerial Council were situated, and where the King's firmness was sorely tried by a succession of deputations, during which time the barricades were in course of erection, and the shot that had been fired from the Arsenal on the attacking crowd raised excitement to the highest pitch.

While driving with the Minister of War along the

right bank of the Elbe from Pirna to Dresden, we met, not far from Link's Baths, a carriage in which were Herr von Carlowitz and a Prussian officer, who, I think, was Herr von Bonin, the same who was at the head of the forces in Saxony in 1866. They brought a notification from Berlin to the effect that the Prussian Government had decided on intervening not merely with a detachment, but with imposing forces, which could not be brought together in less than eight days. I requested Herr von Carlowitz to return to Berlin at once, and to represent urgently that if the promised assistance were delayed, it would come too late, while even the smallest display of Prussian forces would discourage the rebels, as it would be evident that more troops would follow. That Prussia yielded to these representations is only owing to the personal intervention of King Frederick William, who, against the advice of the Minister of War, General Stockhausen, ordered three battalions of the Emperor Alexander's Grenadiers to be sent to our assistance.

I well remember what happened on Friday the 4th, the first day of the riots, in the 'Blockhaus.'* These were the most trying moments of my life. Incessant reports were coming from the Altstadt as to the extension of the rebellion and the approach of armed rebels from the country. There were very few and unreliable tidings of the expected arrival of the troops from the outlying districts, and utter uncertainty as to the appearance of the Prussian troops.

* For non-Saxon readers I remark that the Blockhaus is a Government building near the old bridge, and not, as might be supposed from the name, a sort of fortification.

Moreover there were doubts as to the trustworthiness of our own forces, and fears that lasting inactivity would produce demoralization. In a sort of council of war the leading officers declared that it would be unadvisable to open hostilities; and the resolution was formed, though fortunately only as a preliminary, of withdrawing the troops from the city, and not bringing them back until they had reinforcements. I was given a military paletot and a cap of the cavalry regiment of the guard, and it was arranged that I should leave the city with the troops on horseback. If the grave responsibility that weighed upon me is considered, it will not excite surprise that I said to the ex-minister von Ehrenstein, when he came to the Blockhaus: 'I do not wish to fall into the hands of the frantic rabble; if a bullet kills me, I shall think myself fortunate.' The night was far advanced when Rabenhorst and I sought shelter in the hotels situated in the Meissner-Gasse. They were shut, and remained so in spite of repeated ringing. We returned to the Blockhaus, where some straw was strewn on the floor to afford us beds. It was the second night we had passed in our clothes, and there was scarcely a possibility of sleep.

The next day, Saturday, began and ended more favourably than the preceding days. Various troops had arrived early in the morning from the country, and on the urgent advice of the officers, who pledged themselves for the good conduct of the men, the Minister of War decided to give orders for the attack. The conduct of the troops fully justified the officers' good opinion. A part of the barricades was

stormed, which was no easy task, as they had not been erected by ordinary rebels, but under the direction of a skilful architect. At the same time we received the news that the battalions of the Emperor Alexander's Grenadiers had left Berlin. They arrived at six o'clock in the evening.

I will here vary my narrative by recording an amusing incident which took place that evening in the Blockhaus. We were told that a man who would not give his name, and who looked rather suspicious, wished to speak to us on urgent matters. Geheime Kriegsrath von Abendroth advised us to be cautious, although the man announced that he came from Königstein. We allowed him to enter. Rabenhorst took a loaded pistol, and handed me another. The man entered with his hand in his coat pocket, and he crept along towards us like the assassin in Schiller's ballad: 'Die Bürgschaft.' Rabenhorst cried out in a voice of thunder: 'If you come a step nearer, I will shoot you!' whereupon the unfortunate creature sank down in abject terror, exclaiming: 'If you do not trust me, gentlemen, at least give me a bootjack!' He had really been sent from Königstein, and the despatch he brought was concealed in his boot.

The next morning was full of anxiety. The old opera house was burnt down, and we saw the huge column of fire from the Blockhaus. It may be imagined what I felt at seeing my native town in flames.

Fortunately the conflagration did not spread, which was partly to be attributed to the rain that

fell. The weather had become bad, and I still see the Alexander Grenadiers crossing the bridge—splendid men, gigantic in stature, and each of them with his trousers turned up, remembering, like true soldiers, to take care of their uniforms even in the face of death.

CHAPTER VII.

1849

AFTER THE INSURRECTION.—WHAT IS REACTION

On the 9th of May the Insurrection came to an end. The fighting in the streets had lasted four days. On the fifth we saw the white flag hoisted on the 'Kreuzzthurm.'

The recollection of this signal of peace reminds me of a little trick I played on the Weimar Minister von Watzdorf, who had come to Dresden as Imperial Commissary. We were sitting at a window of the Blockhaus, and I knew that the white flag would soon appear; but I did not impart this knowledge to Watzdorf, who had been for years in the service of Saxony and was an old friend of mine. He went on with his Frankfort tirades and remonstrances, until I at last requested him to look at the Kreuzzthurm, where the white flag was then flying. The author of 'Thirty years of German History,' to whom I

referred in a previous chapter, describes my conduct on this occasion as 'haughty and scornful,' qualities which my bitterest enemy had failed to detect in me. I will leave it undecided whether the Frankfort Imperial Commissaries could say the same of themselves. Herr von Watzdorf was highly esteemed by Prince and people as Minister, and he was a man of great simplicity and courtesy; but as soon as he had donned the Frankfort toga, from the folds of which destruction and salvation were dispensed, he was metamorphosed into another being. He had come to Dresden even before the Insurrection, to persuade the King to accept the Imperial Constitution, and I had had enough of the way in which he played the part of a proconsul, so that I could not resist the temptation of giving myself at the right moment the little satisfaction of disconcerting for a moment my stern judge and tormentor.

On the previous day I had been informed by a deserter that the rebel leaders were on the point of seeking safety in flight; and I was told the road they would take, obviously with the object of inducing me to prevent their escape. I made no use of this information. Of the three members of the so-called 'Provisory,' but more correctly 'derisory,' Government, two escaped, Tzschirner and Todt; the third, Heubner, who was more misled than misleading, was taken prisoner, not in the vicinity of Dresden, but at Chemnitz, at the same time as the Russian Bakunin. Heubner was a District Magistrate, Todt a Privy Councillor. Thus the service of the State was not unrepresented in the rebellion, and that of the

Court also furnished its contingent. The Court Architect, who bore an illustrious name, superintended the erection of the barricades; and among the active supporters of the Provisional Government were to be found the Court band master and the Court concert master. The two former escaped, the latter was arrested. That it was owing to the visions of an over-excited imagination that the composer of 'Rienzi' appeared in the character of a Tribune of the People, was the opinion of his Dresden friends, and for the honour of his name I will believe them, as this view makes it possible to judge less severely his flagrant ingratitude to the King. My well-known aversion to Wagner's music (an aversion that only applies to his later, not to his earlier productions), has been unjustly ascribed to the events of 1849. I know how to discriminate between the cause and the individual, and in this case he had no reason to complain of me. Wagner, who had been sentenced to death in his absence, had, in the first years after his flight, taken refuge in Switzerland and France, and had received an invitation to proceed to Weimar. The Saxon Government had as much the right to demand his extradition as the other German Governments the duty of complying with the demand; and I did not hesitate to exercise this right. Some years later, in consequence of a request from the Tichatschek family (the celebrated tenor Tichatschek was the founder of Wagner's celebrity), who were intimate with Wagner's first wife, an excellent woman, I applied to the King for an amnesty for him, and he was thus enabled to come to Dresden. He paid me

a visit of thanks, and that was the only time I had an interview with him. I received him with these words: 'I am glad that I have been able to do something agreeable to you, Herr Wagner; and I am sure that in return you will not do something disagreeable to me; I must therefore request you not to make any demonstrations.' 'I do not understand,' he replied. 'But surely,' I continued, 'you remember what occurred in 1849?' 'Oh, that was merely an unfortunate misunderstanding.' 'A misunderstanding? Do you mean to say that you are not aware of the fact that the Saxon Government is in possession of a paper, written by your own hand, in which you boast of having taken part in the attempt to burn the Prince's Palace, an outrage which happily was not attended with serious consequences?'

I do not know whether he composed on this occasion the song: 'Frisch, Feuer, Flamme, fröhlich und furchtbar.'

For another representative of Court Music, who had also been condemned to death, the concert-master Röckel, I was able to do more, by procuring his liberation after a long imprisonment. King John adhered firmly to the principle that nobody should be pardoned without presenting a petition for mercy. Röckel, whose sentence had been commuted to penal servitude for life, was the only one who did not comply with this condition, and his resistance became a source of real embarrassment. At length I succeeded in obtaining his liberation from the King even without a petition. I ventured to say that his resistance had something

of antique grandeur about it, 'and,' I added, 'where is the Reactionist who would endure twelve years' imprisonment without praying for mercy?' The King laughed and yielded. Röckel regained his liberty, but rewarded me with the most odious ingratitude. Soon after his release, he published a pamphlet on the Waldheim prison, which he represented as the scene of barbarous cruelties, and pictured me as a tyrant more ruthless than Dionysius of Syracuse. Heubner, who had meanwhile obtained an appointment in a private company, and who deserves the character of an honest and truthful man, told me that Röckel's statements were partly incorrect and partly exaggerated. I think I myself am too well known for anybody to believe that I could take a pleasure in aggravating the sufferings of prisoners. I indeed became aware, though too late, of the fact that the director of the prison was incapacitated by illness during the latter part of his tenure of office, and that some irregularities had occurred in consequence. I once paid a visit to the Waldheim Prison; I had the room opened in which Röckel was confined. It resembled anything rather than a dungeon. I found Röckel neither picking oakum nor twisting cigar leaves, but writing at a desk. On perceiving me, he made a stiff ceremonious bow, and then, turning his back upon me, went on with his writing without taking any further notice of my presence. There was nothing to prevent him from taking the opportunity of making complaints if he had had any to make. But the Spartan defiance which prevented him from sending in a petition, may often have

prompted him to disobedience and resistance, resulting in proportionate severities on the part of his gaolers.

Although he showed himself ungrateful, I am glad not to be obliged to say the same of his gifted daughter, who was destined to have a brilliant career at the Court Theatre at Weimar, and subsequently at the 'Burgtheater' in Vienna. After 1870, the Vienna *Tagblatt* published a series of autobiographies of the members of the 'Burgtheater;' and I was not only pleased, but touched, to see with what warmth Frau Mathes, née Röckel, mentions that the liberation of her father was owing entirely to me. Röckel himself came to Vienna when I was Minister, and warmly apologised to me. But he could not obliterate the consequences of his pamphlet. How often and with what comments have I heard the word 'Waldheim,' and myself denounced as the most barbarous of gaolers! Compared to me, Sir Hudson Lowe was an entertaining companion.

The history of the prisoners of May has led me far beyond the year 1849, to which I must now return. But that history belongs to the great chapter of the 'Reaction.'

It is remarkable how certain current phrases have been and still are abused. I will show further on how this has distorted facts. The word 'reaction' is used in a very loose sense. This year—1884—some Austrian noblemen who have votes in the Hungarian Upper Chamber went to Pesth to vote against the Mixed Marriage Bill. This is called reaction. I myself regret the step for two reasons, first, because it promotes the Anti-Semitic movement, which

I oppose, as I consider it unjust in its origin and pernicious in its consequences; and secondly, because it impedes the system of dualism, and for obvious reasons I desire the stability of that system. But what is reaction? It is the counter effect of action, and can therefore only be opposition to an already existing state of things. If mixed marriages were already legal in Hungary, and a Cziraki-Apponyi Ministry were to propose their abolition, that would be reaction; but this word cannot be applied to the opponents of something not yet introduced. In England no one would think of stamping as reactionists the members of the Upper House who voted against the Reform Bill, the Corn Laws Bill, and the abolition of the Irish Church. In that country, indeed, less is said and more is understood of liberty than here.

By reaction is generally understood a species of conspiracy which at first proceeds in secret and then in open opposition to progress and Liberalism.* This view is not wholly without foundation, but it is extremely one-sided. In most cases, reaction is only the natural consequence of action, like the ebb and flow of the tide. The higher the flow the more extensive the ebb, and it cannot be arrested by commanding the sea to go thus far and no farther.

How much has been said and written on the subject of reaction in Saxony, even up to the present

* Equally unfounded is the assertion that the 'Reaction' is hostile to the Bourgeoisie and the Tiers État, as the representatives of the intelligence of a country. I have every respect for the Bourgeoisie and the Tiers État, which no doubt furnish the largest contingent of intelligence: but as it is not the lot of all to belong to those classes, it is hard to deny intelligence to the other ones. Bismarck and Moltke, each in his branch, represent the highest development of the German mind, but neither would claim or admit that he should be considered as belonging to the Tiers État.

time! I remember that an article in the *Pester Lloyd* on my resignation praised the 'Saxon Reactionist' for having known how to become in Austria the founder of an era of freedom. But to no country would my simile of the ebb and flow of the tide be more applicable than to Saxony. When everything went to wrack and ruin as in Saxony, when disorder culminated in riots in the capital which were led by Government officials, and which were further supported by clergymen and schoolmasters, it could scarcely be expected that a reconciliation should take place as if nothing had happened. No conscientious witness of events will maintain that a rabid and persecuting reaction supervened. I, for my part, remember nothing of the so-called 'weeding-out' of objectionable individuals. If we read the articles in the *Kreuz-Zeitung* of that period, we shall find more than one complaint of the 'laxity' of the Saxon Government. Thus I was bitterly reproached in the Chambers, but not till the year 1861, for having introduced 'lists of the conduct of officials.' All I had done was to order the local administrations to draw up from time to time tables showing the formation of the Town Councils, and giving details of the personal and political antecedents of the members. This had no other object than to afford information to the Ministry which would be of use when nominations were sent up for confirmation, and it had for me the particular advantage of making me 'au fait' when I was visiting the various towns. The measure was of small importance, however, to the Government, and it was abolished directly it was objected to.

That errors may have been committed—that the awkwardness of some officials may have caused exceptional and unintended hardship—I will not deny. But were the gentlemen who exercised power in 1848 so very considerate towards men and things? And was it not more difficult to give up that which had been possessed for scores of years, than that which had been possessed for only one year?

I have spoken of the blundering of some officials. In that category we must include the 'Black Book,' issued after 1850. A member of the 'Polizei-Direktion,' who thought his abilities were not appreciated, justified the prejudice entertained against him by drawing up an alphabetical list of all politically incriminated persons. I dispelled his illusions when he appeared before me in full uniform, and presented his precious work to me in the hope of being substantially rewarded; but the poor fellow had gone to the expense of printing several hundred copies, and it was an act of charity to take them from him; and as they were in existence, it was thought just as well to send them to the various Police Offices, according to the principle 'superflua non nocent.' No orders were issued to watch the actions of the individuals designated. In fact, nobody was injured by the work except its author. This system of surveillance, as useless as it was vexatious, was abolished the moment it came to my knowledge.

On the other hand, after I had taken the post of Minister of the Interior in 1852, and had placed in the following year the Dresden Police under the

control of the State (it had hitherto been under that of the town), I endeavoured to protect the police in the exercise of their duties, which are neither light nor grateful. When it is remarked that the London policeman, though unarmed, is civilly treated by everyone, the answer is usually given that it is owing to the Englishman's innate respect for the law. But the law plays the chief part in this matter, for it acquits the policeman if in self-defence he kills those who attack him, and threatens his assailants with penalties extending even to penal servitude. If the guardians of public safety were to enjoy similar protection on the Continent, the public would respect the law more than it does at present.

After the May insurrection I never forgot that the unintentional, but not less responsible, originators of it could not be punished, as it was only the lamentable connivance of the Ministry of March towards the good-natured, but incapable Oberländer, which had for a whole year literally educated the otherwise so pacific and orderly populace to rebellion. It will scarcely be believed, but it is positively true, that for this reason I thought the idea of an amnesty, under given circumstances, eminently rational. I had to take into consideration the views of the Ministers of War and Justice, and I recognised the objections to such a step, but I was always disturbed by that connection between cause and effect.

To complete the chapter on the Saxon Reaction, then in its zenith (after 1860 it was no longer spoken of, and I once actually had to defend myself

against a reproach addressed to my Government from Berlin that we were becoming too Liberal), I must not omit to mention what I did when presiding over the Ministry of Public Worship and Instruction. This department had its own President up to 1848, and after 1852; Pfordten undertook it in 1848 in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and I did the same after the May insurrection.

Nobody will blame me for having undertaken above all to banish the pernicious influence of politics from the Church and the schools. A new School Law made supervision more stringent, while at the same time it introduced a much desired and highly necessary increase of the lowest rate of salary. With regard to the Church, although educated by my pious mother in an orthodox spirit, I have always been averse to cant, and inclined to free religious views. I was and am of opinion that as, on the one hand, nobody ought to be forced to believe in religion or to practise it, so on the other those who value the Church and religion have the right of demanding that their religious views and customs shall not be fettered. We see these ideas thoroughly carried out in England. I often travelled on the Brighton line, and remarked little printed papers at all the stations. Being short-sighted, I fancied they were time-tables. On looking at them closely, I found them to be leaflets, circulated by religious societies, containing the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. This may be considered mere fanaticism, but if the same were done in the neighbourhood of Berlin or

Vienna, the leaflets would in a short time be scribbled over with profane jokes. Such a thing never happens in England.

I was of opinion that if the Government is called upon to influence the Church by the choice of clergymen, it is bound to consider those who believe rather than those who can no longer be said to do so. But I must openly confess, although I am a Protestant myself, that the Protestants are far more inclined to be intolerant than the Catholics. The Catholics lay more stress on religious practices and less on the forms of belief. The Protestants are either aggressive or exclusive. In the vicinity of Dresden, at Tharandt, there is a celebrated Foresters' Academy, which is also visited by foreigners. At the time when I assumed the direction of the Ministry of Public Worship, there had just been a change of clergymen. The former clergyman had been somewhat remiss in the performance of his duties; and as neither the professors nor the pupils of the Academy were religiously inclined, scarcely anybody went to church. I was recommended to appoint a clergyman who had been for some time in the French part of Switzerland, but whose views were orthodox. He proved so excellent a preacher, that the peasantry of the surrounding districts flocked to his church; but being a strict churchman, all those people who had long given up going to church attended his services not to listen to his sermons, but only to denounce him for his obnoxious views.

Much fault was found with the appointment of Harless as Chief Court Preacher in the place of

Ammon, who was as popular as he was learned. I had known Harless in Munich, where he defended the cause of the Protestants with great boldness in the Chamber against the Abel Ministry; and it was through my intervention that he was, like Pfordten, called to Leipzig. After filling the office of Chief Court Preacher at Dresden for some years, he was summoned back to Bavaria by King Max II, in the capacity of President of the Chief Consistory, and the Bavarian Protestants were not at all impeded in the exercise of their religious duties by his nomination.

Can there be a better illustration of the difference between Catholics and Protestants in the question of tolerance than the Anti-Semitic agitation, with Stöcker on the one side and Haynald on the other?

An amusing episode will not be out of place here:

In the years 1845 to 1849, Ronge had introduced 'German Catholicism' into Saxony, but there were also so-called 'free congregations.' I was Minister of Public Worship, and a visitor was announced to me: 'The Elder of the Landeskirchen-Vorstand.' I expected to see a venerable old man in long robes, when a most elegantly-dressed gentleman entered with the words: 'Your Excellency does not remember me? I am the tailor M. In the year 1840 all foreign workmen were to have been banished from Paris, but through your intercession I remained at Chevreuil's, and I shall be ever grateful to you for your kindness.' 'I am very glad,' I replied, 'but how do you come to

occupy your present position?' 'I really do not know; but if it leads me into expense, I shall resign.' 'You would do well.'

More than once after that interview I received successful works, not of a theological kind, from the skilful hands of the 'Elder of the Landeskirchen-Vorstand.'

CHAPTER VIII

1849

THE ALLIANCE OF THE THREE KINGS.—THE FIRST DIFFERENCES WITH BERLIN.—THE PILLNITZ INTERVIEW.—MY FIRST TRIP TO VIENNA.

During the period—seventeen years—when I was Minister in Dresden, I myself wrote all my political papers and despatches. In Vienna I only wrote some of them. It would have been unjust to the excellent assistants I found there, had I not made use of their talents; and during the first few years when I had to attend as much (if not more) to internal as to foreign affairs, I should not have had the time. As a rule, I preferred dictating to writing myself; this afforded the double advantage of diminishing the task of the copyist and of accelerating my own, for I found that one makes fewer or shorter pauses when in the presence of a secretary who is waiting for the next word.*

* My excellent secretary at Dresden, Zschille, for whom I obtained the Cross of Honour, was one of the few persons who could always read my handwriting. My old friend Weber used to say: 'Beust has three handwritings; the first only Zschille can read, the second only himself can read, and the third even himself cannot read.'

The cause of the failure of the Frankfort Constitution and of the fruitlessness of the National Assembly was not that Vienna had produced a Windischgrätz and a Jellacic, and Berlin a Brandenburg and a Wrangel; nor was it to be found in the opposition of parties, and still less in a hostile attitude of Governments. The true cause was that the National Assembly was unconscious of the necessity recognised in constitutional States, and above all in England, of an executive power which must not only carry out but direct the resolutions of Parliament. It therefore preferred to seek support in the principle of the sovereignty of the people, and only tolerated a Central Power that would blindly execute its decrees. In this respect it resembled, in its progress and in its end, the French National Convention, fortunately minus the guillotine.

On the invitation of the Prussian Government, negotiations took place at Berlin, soon after the May insurrection, on the subject of a Constitution which should be a modification of the Frankfort scheme. With the exception of General von Radowitz, who had special instructions, no other Prussian Plenipotentiary took part in these negotiations. The Austrian Ambassador, Baron Prokesch, was present only on the first day, and on the second he withdrew when the scheme of a Confederation of States exclusive of Austria was brought forward. The Bavarian Ambassador, Count Lerchenfeld, being totally without instructions, did not make any declaration at all. More energy was shown by the Hanoverian Plenipotentiaries, the Minister Dr Stüve

and Herr von Wangenheim. I was accompanied by the Minister Behr, who, however, remained perfectly passive.

General von Radowitz was a prominent personage. It is well-known that he possessed extensive knowledge and vast reading, which procured him high favour with Frederick William IV. When the most striking characters of the Frankfort Parliament were represented in a comic illustration which could not be called altogether a caricature, Radowitz appeared as a Capuchin monk with a sword in his girdle. A pugnacious monk and a pugnacious warrior, such were the types really suggested by him. It is curious that he, a Catholic, had a Catholic Secretary from the Rhine provinces to help him to complete the plan for the exclusion of Austria from the Germanic Confederation, for this could not have been altered by the Austro-German Alliance which even then was already in contemplation. It has been said that Austria's peculiar organisation made her participation in the proposed constitution impossible. To this it might be answered that if the Confederation had hitherto possessed a member of the highest importance to whom the suggested scheme was not suited, the first question to be considered should have been the means of adapting the Constitution to that member. Up to that time everybody had thought that constitutions were made for countries, not countries for constitutions. It would have been worth while to make the attempt; and even an honest, though futile, attempt, would have given more life to the scheme than the obstinate determination to push the scheme

with or without allies. But on that question any words would have been wasted. Intercourse with General von Radowitz was not always of the easiest, but I was fully compensated for the trouble he then gave me thirty years later by his son, of whom I have the most agreeable recollections when he was for a time my colleague in Paris.

A no less interesting acquaintance was the first Hanoverian Plenipotentiary, Dr Stüve, who had been prominent in the opposition when Burgomaster of Osnabrück, and was one of the few Ministers of March who survived the year 1848. It was remarkable how quickly he fitted himself into new circumstances. King Ernest Augustus was heard to say: 'This little Stüve is a famous fellow.' And Stüve said: 'I expected to encounter an obstinate tyrant, and I found a most amiable and sympathetic old gentleman.' When I dined in the summer of 1849 at Hanover with the King, I saw Stüve not merely in court dress, but in knee-breeches. I thought to myself: 'If my old Hofmarschall could have seen that, how reconciled he would have become to modern times, and what a high opinion he would have formed of the loyalty of the Hanoverians!'

Stüve did not yield to Radowitz in vigour of thought or expression. But his mind was evidently influenced by two considerations: fear of the Reaction made him take strong measures, while on the other hand he was sometimes softened by thoughts of the 'amiable old gentleman.'

An interview at Pillnitz, very unlike that of 1792, although the heads of the same families were present,

took place about this time. The Emperor Francis Joseph and King Frederick William IV were the guests of Frederick Augustus. This personal intercourse could only have been beneficial, but it remained without result, and I doubt whether the conversations which took place dealt with anything more than generalities. I saw the Emperor on that occasion for the first time; he was nineteen years of age, and exactly as represented in his life-size portrait in the waiting-room of the 'Ball-Platz.' He was distinguished by military precision and yet elegance of manner, combined with much gravity and firmness.

Soon afterwards I saw, also for the first time, the Emperor's Premier in Vienna. Prince Schwarzenberg would have been, even without the events that made him so prominent a figure, striking by his appearance alone, which showed the *grand seigneur* in unaffected simplicity as contrasted with the *parvenu*. His energy and his ability have never been questioned.

I may say that Prince Schwarzenberg took a fancy to me from the first moment he saw me, and he continued my firm friend until his death. The more difficult will it be for me to appear as his accuser in one of the following chapters, which, as an impartial historian, I shall be compelled to do.

Prince Schwarzenberg had the greatest contempt for the human race, but he had not a profound knowledge of human nature, and this deficiency explains and excuses much that he did and much that he left undone.

In Schwarzenberg's Ministry were Schmerling, Bach, and Leo Thun—a remarkable combination

if we consider what happened later on. It did not last long, for Schmerling, with whom I then became acquainted for the first time, and who remained my sincere and constant friend in spite of Dualism, resigned soon afterwards. But, peculiar as that combination may appear at the present day, Schwarzenberg might have done much with it, if, instead of advising the withdrawal of the Constitution of the 4th of March 1849, he had undertaken its amelioration. At that time the situation was such that the Hungarians would have been obliged to yield to circumstances, and I believe that Schmerling is not mistaken in maintaining to this day that they would have come. He and Bach were the very men to carry out a revision of the Constitution in the most conservative sense; and Thun, who was not yet the Minister of the Concordat, would not have refused to lend a helping hand. That the contrary came to pass was very welcome to Austria's enemies at Berlin and Turin. A dangerous weapon was thereby placed in their hands—that of compromise.

CHAPTER IX

1850

OLMÜTZ

It is to me a difficult task to throw a shadow, or rather a mourning veil, over the memory of a man who always distinguished me with his confidence, who did great things in the service of Austria, and to whom Austria owes her high position in Europe—gained after many a hard struggle—and her greater stability in internal affairs. But even the most remarkable men have their weak moments and their days of error, and at Olmütz the moment was very weak and the error very great.

In those days of November 1850—(the month of November has played a great part in my career: in November I entered office in Austria, in November I resigned, in November I became Ambassador in London, in November I left that city)—in those days of November 1850 I received a visit one morning from

my doctor, who addressed me with the following words: 'How ill you look! Have you got the jaundice?' 'Possibly,' I replied. I had just received the news of the Olmütz Convention.* 'I feel,' I added, 'like one who loses a game of whist by the bad play of his partner.' That I nevertheless knew how to control my feelings, is proved by the speech I made on the subject in the Upper Saxon Chamber.

What was the military situation at that time? In Bohemia there were three completely armed Austrian Corps d'Armée, accustomed to victory; eighty thousand Bavarians, too, were in the field, and thirty thousand Saxons commanded the Elbe as far as Torgau; while in Prussia nothing was ready. I received the confirmation of this last fact from no less a person than the present Emperor of Germany, then Prince of Prussia, when I paid him a visit in 1851 at Berlin. 'They might have come,' he said, 'as far as Berlin, but how would they have got out?' Respect prevented me from answering that when once in, it is easy to go out, but not easy to be driven out. How often did I hear, even after the battle of Sedan, Frenchmen who came to Vienna exclaim, 'Pas un ne sortira!'

I can repeat the Emperor William's saying without contradiction, thanks to Dr Busch's book

* Disturbances having arisen in Hesse-Cassel owing to the Elector having endeavoured to raise taxes without the consent of the Chamber, he applied to Austria for assistance. The Frankfort diet approved the application, and Austrian and Bavarian troops were sent into the country. Prussia, on the other hand, supported the malcontents, and occupied Cassel, the capital, with her army before the allied troops arrived. Her resolution, however, failed her at the last moment; her Foreign Minister, Radowitz resigned, and his successor, Manteuffel, arranged a meeting with Prince Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Minister, at Olmütz, where convention was signed in which Prussia virtually yielded all Austria's demands.

'Unser Reichskanzler,' a work which, though unfavourable to me, I have found useful on more than one occasion. Dr Busch quotes the following passage from a speech delivered by Prince Bismarck in the German Diet on the 24th of January 1882:—

'The gentlemen in Parliament understood political possibilities in Europe so little that they did not perceive that in order to obtain German unity, the first essential requisite was a strong Prussian Army, and the second the approval of the King of Prussia. Instead of this the King was opposed to the utmost in his endeavour to make his Army strong enough not only to establish but to represent German Unity, and we would, if Parliament had had its own way, have had to put up with that military organisation which made the bravest of soldiers—for such was the Minister of War at the time of the Convention of Olmütz—declare to me when I announced myself to him as Deputy and Officer of the Landwehr: "*It is quite impossible for us to go to war; we cannot prevent the Austrians from occupying Berlin.*"'

I myself alluded in the most considerate manner to that episode in the Austrian Reichsrath in 1868, when the Land Defence Bill was being debated. My words were as follows:—

'Much has been said—and can we wonder at it?—about the unfortunate and disastrous wars in which we have been involved; but I ask, where are the ambitious diplomatists who caused them? Where has there been any restless activity of warlike Ministers? I look back on the twenty years that have passed since the dissolution of the old Austria of

Metternich, and I find one statesman with whom I was in close contact. He was totally devoid of personal ambition, although he had a bold and enterprising spirit. And what did this statesman do at Olmütz? I will not revert to the contents of that Convention, which has been considered with equal injustice, as a humiliation in Prussia and as a success in Austria. But I am certain that if at that time circumstances had been reversed, if Prussia had been armed and Austria defenceless, the Austrian Minister would scarcely have received an invitation to come to Breslau, and that he would have brought back something very different from the preliminaries for the continuation of the old Federal connection.'

Outside Parliament I threw reserve aside, and said openly: 'Olmütz was not a Prussian humiliation, but an Austrian weakness.'

'Avilir la Prusse d'abord et la démolir ensuite' is a saying that has been attributed to Prince Schwarzenberg. I am convinced that he never uttered it, as Olmütz itself proved most emphatically; but I am also convinced that he did not recognise what the occasion required. 'Ni avilir, ni démolir, mais contenir' —that was the problem, a problem requiring considerate, but firm and vigilant treatment, and especially the employment of the right moment, which was completely neglected at Olmütz.

Thus, according to the confession of the Emperor and Chancellor of Germany, Prussia could not have prevented the occupation of Berlin. And in this commanding position Austria concludes a convention with her defenceless opponent, by which the latter

retracts none of the things which threatened the former and her Allies, only leaving Austria the honour of protecting the King of Denmark and the Elector of Hesse! Everything else was left to chance. Free conferences without a programme, without previous stipulations! According to the tradition which I have blamed in other parts of this work, of placing appearances higher than realities, Austria thought she had gained a great point when Berlin gave up the union proposed by Radowitz; she did not think of securing guarantees that that union should not be revived ten or twenty years later in another form. This self-complacency could not be better supported in Berlin than by the strong expression of a feeling of humiliation, which was easily appeased, as the Prussian sense of honour has always been of a peculiar kind, and very different from that of other countries. Meanwhile, Austria was not the gainer. It is intelligible that monuments should be erected in Germany, and especially in Prussia, to Bismarck, but Prussia also owes a statue to a less celebrated, though equally useful statesman—Baron von Manteuffel—for having gone to Olmütz and brought back with him a cheap olive branch.

I well remember what was said to us from Vienna: 'We must facilitate the task of the new Prussian Ministry, which shows us such good-will.' I can only here repeat the remark I made in a former chapter, that Prince Schwarzenberg despised men but did not know them. Had he known them, he would have thought of the words that Schiller put into the mouth of Tell's wife, when he relates to her how he had sent

his attendants after Gessler who had lost his way in the mountains:

'Thou'lt rue that deed!
He'll ne'er forgive thy having seen his weakness.'

Prince Schwarzenberg certainly did not expect gratitude, for he despised mankind too much; but he as little expected that those to whom he had been merciful should revenge themselves upon him. In the next chapter I shall have occasion to show how this revenge began to work in the following year, not in the heart of Frederick William IV, but in the deeds of one who was destined to become a great power in the world. Herr von Manteuffel also did not then lose the opportunity of playing generous Austria a trick with the Hanoverian Treaty, which was concluded the same year.

This conflict was only the last link in the chain. For two years the tendency to thrust Austria from Germany had been manifesting itself. Nothing had been done to prevent the offer to Prussia of the Imperial Crown at Frankfort; it was rejected in the concrete, not in the abstract—not because its acceptance would have entailed a rupture with Austria, but because Prussia did not consider that those who offered it were authorised to do so, though she looked upon the offer as giving her a claim. Then came Bunsen's January despatch, and finally, Radowitz's scheme of union—the Federal State. On the other hand, guarantees had to be demanded for the future. Was it difficult to do so? By no means; Prussia herself afforded the pretext. Radowitz declared that there was no room for Austria in the Federal State.

If this had been the case, and if Prussia had wished to continue the Federal connection with Austria, the logical conclusion would have been that no scheme incompatible with the German Confederation should have been entertained, and that that Confederation should have continued and been sanctioned afresh. There were pens enough in Vienna that could have placed things in an amiable and inoffensive light, but the agreement should have been clear and unequivocal.

Yes, but the feeling in Germany and the honour of Prussia? Either one thing or the other. If a country wants peace, knowing that it has not the power to prevent the enemy from occupying its capital, it is not in a position to consider such things.

Prince Schwarzenberg said to me when he arrived at Dresden: 'You would have preferred our coming to blows; so should I.' Perhaps it would have been better if war had broken out then. It would at least have been shorter than the war of 1866.

If Prussia had been defeated, which would certainly have been the case according to the above quoted Prussian authorities, she would not have been deprived of a single village. The Emperor Nicholas, then at Warsaw, would have taken care of that. But for twenty or thirty years we should have heard no more of the Federal State with a single head.*

I beg the reader not to forget that I am an Austrian, and that I write as such. And let it not be believed that a cry of joy would have been raised

* On this occasion I will not leave one thing unsaid. Neither in 1850 nor in 1866 was a special Treaty concluded between Austria and Saxony, whether for the purpose of re-acquisition of lost territory, or with any other object. Saxony stood entirely on the basis of the German Confederation.

by the Governments hostile to Prussia. This hostility to Prussia was more an idea than a reality. In the speech which I made shortly before the war of 1866 in the Second Saxon Chamber, I said:—'Prussian notions of friendship and enmity are somewhat peculiar. If it were not almost profane, I should be inclined to say that as in religion everything against Divine Law is godless, so in our great neighbouring State whoever does anything not quite to its liking is at once called Prussia's enemy.' Only in this sense was there sometimes, though reluctantly, 'hostility to Prussia' in Munich and Stuttgart, as in Dresden and Hanover.

To a revival of hearty and confidential relations between Prussia and Austria, all these Governments without exception would most gladly have contributed.

It is remarkable how history sometimes repeats itself in a contrary sense. It is known how opposed Count Mensdorf was to the war of 1866. In 1850 the Minister of Foreign Affairs recognises the advantages of war and abstains from it, in 1866 the Minister of Foreign Affairs recognises its disadvantages and declares it! A hollow peace was concluded in 1850, after everything had been done to excite the zeal of the Confederate States. When the news of the dismissal of Herr von Radowitz reached Dresden, I at once caused a suspension of the mobilisation, partly not to increase unnecessarily the burthens of the country, and partly with the object of facilitating the surrender of Prussia. Vienna was extremely annoyed at this measure, and urged a continuance of the mobilisation. Yet soon afterwards it was notified that as the

Prussians were leaving Cassel, the mobilisation could be stopped and its expense put down as a dead loss! That Saxony chose to forget this was proved by her prompt appearance in the field in 1866; but Bavaria remembered it, as no one knew better than I, and as was proved by her conduct in that year.

I have a two-fold explanation and excuse for Prince Schwarzenberg's mistake.

In the first place, he had to consider the youth of his Imperial Master; for although, as he often assured me, he knew that the Emperor's appreciation of political questions was in advance of his years, he could not forget how serious is the responsibility of the adviser of a youthful sovereign. In such a position a conscientious man may listen to the voices of timid counsellors, though he himself may be far from timid by nature; and such voices were probably not wanting. We may further excuse him by saying that he could not fully appreciate the true scope of the question involved (a question that should have been decided when Austria was strongest)—namely, whether Austria was to continue a member of the German Confederation. He could not do this, because, as must in justice be confessed, very few at that time were able to perceive the importance of the crisis. In the question of the exclusion of Austria from Germany, which no alliance can palliate, was involved not only the place of honour secured to the Emperor by Divine and human right as the heir of a long line of German Emperors—not only a Confederation of States which gave considerable strength to Austria's position as a great power, and which

protected the most important of her extensive frontiers against attack—but also the natural, certain, and pacific solution of a problem which is now the cause of grave anxiety: I mean the maintenance of the privileged position of the German as opposed to the non-German subjects of the Emperor. In the second part of my Memoirs I have treated of this question in the proper place. Whatever the Germans may allege about their superior culture, the foundation of the Empire by German deeds, and so on, produces no impression whatever on the Slavs. But if Austria had retained her prominent position in Germany, the Slavs could not have closed their eyes and ears to the claims of the German Austrians to hold the first place in the monarchy.

As I have said, one can understand, though one must regret all this. When Benedek thought it better not to accept the battle of Königgrätz, he wanted to retreat with his army to Olmütz. But the merciless logic of history had long ago decreed that the road from Olmütz must lead to Königgrätz.

CHAPTER X

1851

THE DRESDEN CONFERENCES.—THE BUNDESTAG.—TRIP TO LONDON AND FRANKFORT.—BISMARCK.

It was a solemn and not unimpressive ceremony when Prince Schwarzenberg opened the Ministerial Conferences in the Brühl Palace at Dresden, and I was able to answer the Prince's speech in sincere confidence with the words: 'It appears to me a Providential sign of reconciliation that the town which still shows traces of those evil days when enthusiasm for German Unity seemed only to let loose the elements of destruction, should be the meeting-place of men called to banish those elements, and to restore peace and concord to the Fatherland.' Begun in this promising way, the Conferences ended with a mutual rendezvous at Frankfort.*

* The object of the 'Dresden Conferences' was to arrive at a settlement of the Constitution of the Germanic Confederation. No decision was arrived at, as Austria and Prussia could not agree on the subject.

Prince Schwarzenberg and Baron Manteuffel were present only occasionally; the former had a deputy who gave more satisfaction to himself than to others, and the latter had the good fortune to leave behind him a representative than whom Prussia could not have desired a better.

If Prince Schwarzenberg had had more knowledge of mankind, he would not have made the choice he did. Count Buol had been for a time envoy at Stuttgart, but for a still longer time he was out of Germany, chiefly in Russia; and he was so little acquainted with German affairs that at a banquet of the Dresden Archery Society he drank to the health 'of the town of Dresden, which had ever been loyal to its dynasty'—the very town which scarcely a year before had been in full rebellion! When in the month of April of the following year, the Ministers of the Central States were assembled at Darmstadt for a Customs' Conference, the alarming news arrived of the death of Prince Schwarzenberg. Count Thun, the presiding Ambassador, brought us the tidings, mentioning at the same time Count Buol as the Prince's probable successor. When this name was pronounced, there was a universal exclamation of surprise and discouragement. Nevertheless this judgment was premature. I soon afterwards had to go to Vienna about the Customs question, and I was agreeably surprised to find the Minister, whom I had seen so weak, possessed of no slight power of argument. But unfortunately the saying of old Prince Metternich came perfectly true: 'Count Buol,' he said, 'is a knife with a sharp point, but with no

edge.' How well that saying characterises the Count's career as a Minister! The policy of Austria nearly everywhere pricked, but did not cut; and the consequence was that much anger was aroused, and few advantages were gained. But perhaps it was that very incisiveness of style that led Prince Schwarzenberg to make so unsuitable a choice for the Dresden Conferences.

It was here especially that Prussia opposed him with a man who by imperceptible degrees made himself master of the situation. Count Alvensleben, formerly Minister of Finance, had hitherto been more known for his acrimony than for anything else, and this soon put an end to his career as a Minister of Frederick William IV. It was he, however, that, with incredible subtlety and pliancy, gained the upper hand, and liberated Prussia from a project which would have conferred a privileged and influential position on the four Kingdoms, and which Prussia herself had laid before the Conference jointly with Austria. It was further owing to his decomposing influence, which was neither perceived nor disturbed by his Austrian colleague, that many not unimportant papers on general administration which were handed over to Frankfort were pigeon-holed there under the heading of 'valuable materials.'

I remember that before this was done I handed to my neighbour, Herr von Bülow, Minister for Danish-Holstein to the Bundestag, a paper ending with the words: 'The august Governments are requested to act accordingly.' I struck out the word 'act,' observing: 'This is the result of the Conferences.'

I must here say a few words about Herr von Bülow. Of his undoubted mental power I need not speak, for had he not possessed it, Prince Bismarck would never, as German Chancellor, have appointed him to an eminent and influential post. His charming manners and powerful intellect are among my most pleasing recollections. It was remarkable how he changed sides. In the days of the Dresden Conferences, Herr von Bülow was not only a strong reactionist, but a decided enemy of Prussia. And this man ends his career as a confidant of Prince Bismarck! Still more remarkable was the intermediate stage, in which he proceeded to Berlin as Minister of Mecklenburg. Not of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which was always at the beck and call of Berlin, but of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, which always looked more to Vienna, and where there was little sympathy for the new formation of Germany. Anything else could scarcely have been expected, as the Grand-Duchess Dowager was born a Princess of Hesse, and the Grand-Duchess Regnant was a Princess of Hanover. Prince Bismarck knows how to find 'his people,' and enquires but little into the origin of his materials so long as the stuff is good.

I did not meet Herr von Bülow again after the Dresden Conferences until 1879, at Gastein. Unfortunately, he was taken ill there, and, I believe, died soon afterwards.

Another acquaintance which I owe to the Dresden Conferences, and which developed into a lasting and warm friendship, was that of the Grand Ducal Hessian Minister Baron von Dalwigk. We remained closely

intimate without a single difference or estrangement, and I was able to count upon him in every phase of German affairs. Dalwigk, like myself, was persecuted as an 'enemy of Prussia,' and with equal injustice, although his inclination to Austria was more decided than mine. The time of the Crimean War was, I may say, the only one during which I found it difficult to agree with him on all points. Even less than of hatred of Prussia could he be accused of 'Rheinbündelei.'* The Hessian Government was very subservient to Napoleon III, like other German Governments, which merely followed in that the example of greater Powers; but in the year 1859 I never saw anybody more hostile to France, and more in favour of war, that Dalwigk. Of his ability in internal administration I heard even his political opponents speak with respect. But as I was quite Saxon, so was he quite Hessian.

I cannot conclude my reminiscences of the Dresden Conferences without mentioning two noteworthy incidents connected with them.

As soon as we received the intelligence that the Conferences were to be held at Dresden, I suggested to King Frederick Augustus that he should give the Austrian and Prussian Ministers a residence in the Royal Palace. The King agreed, and Prince Schwarzenberg and Baron von Manteuffel were quartered in the 'Prinzenpalais,' which adjoins the Castle. I do not wonder that this gave some offence at Munich; and to this day I give Pfordten credit for not having

* 'Rhenish Confederationism'—in allusion to the formation by the smaller German States in 1806 of the Confederation of the Rhine, under the protection of Napoleon, against Austria and Prussia.

resented it. But the more important part of the affair consists in my having thus manifested my partiality for a scheme which I, the so-called enemy of Prussia, endeavoured in vain to bring about in 1861 and 1863, viz., the alternate presidency of Austria and Prussia in the Confederation, thereby making them virtually equal.

The other incident to which I refer was the following: There was at Dresden a Professor of the Painters' Academy, who at that time was very old. In former days he had produced excellent works; but he gradually deteriorated, until at last he could find no purchasers for his pictures. He took it into his head to paint a large historical picture of the Conference, but there were two difficulties in the way. In the first place it was not certain whether the King would buy the painting when finished; and secondly, Prince Schwarzenberg had never sat to a painter in his life, as it bored him, and he was not inclined to do so now, having no wish to be immortalised on canvas. What did our Professor do? He persuaded the King that Prince Schwarzenberg was interested in the picture; and he convinced Prince Schwarzenberg that the King wished to have it. In extenuation of his conduct I must add that the painter himself fully believed what he said, his vanity not allowing him to doubt it for a moment. Prince Schwarzenberg told us that the painter wanted to use him as a Wouverman's horse, because of his white uniform. On one side of the picture was Prince Schwarzenberg talking to Pfordten, on the other Baron von Manteuffel seated at a table across which I was handing a document to him.

One day I went to the painter to give him a sitting, and I found that I was represented close against the table and overshadowed by a huge figure, under which I almost disappeared. 'Who is that?' I asked. 'Oh, that is the Mecklenburg Minister, it is absolutely necessary to put him here.' 'Why?' 'Because he has a red uniform, which introduces a good bit of colour.' 'But don't you see that if I get up I shall hit Mecklenburg on the head? I do not wish to do that; the whole thing looks as if they meant to prevent me from presenting my document.' The Professor, however, would have been disconsolate without the red uniform. 'Very well,' I said. 'Leave the depressed position, it agrees with my depressed spirits!'

Soon after the conclusion of the Conference, I went to London, where the first great International Exhibition, the creation of Prince Albert, had just been opened. After leaving London in 1848, I had not been recalled nor had a successor been appointed, so that I formally remained in the position described by Lord Palmerston as that of the 'Colossus of Rhodes.' The delivery of the note by which I was recalled was the cause of my first interview with Prince Albert, in whose favour I had not risen, thanks to Bunsen's intrigues. I saw the Prince for the last time in 1859, just before the Italian War, and he was then more favourable to me and to Austria.

On my way home I stopped a day at Frankfort. At the house of Count Friedrich Thun, the presiding envoy at the Confederation and my still intimate friend, I had my second meeting with Herr

von Bismarck. He was not yet Minister, but only a 'Geheimer Legationsrath,' under the orders of General von Rochow, whom he was soon to succeed. Although at that time nobody dreamed of his future greatness, the words he then uttered made a deep impression upon me, and I have often remembered one of his sayings during the Kulturkampf. The Thun family is related to the family of Count Westspal, which has some estates in Bohemia, and more in Westphalia. The conversation turned on a member of the latter family who was fervently religious, and Bismarck observed that 'such firm Catholics are the King's best subjects.'

I now come to the theme of 'Prussia at the Bundestag.' I have not invented this phrase—it stands before me as the title of three portly volumes issued by Poschinger.

Prince Bismarck occupies so prominent a place, not only in the destiny of nations, but also in my humble career, that I shall more than once have occasion to occupy myself with him and with his actions. I say in all sincerity that it is against my will that on the first occasion on which I mention him in my Memoirs, I am compelled to write against him; for one of the 'fables convenues,' of which there are so many in the present day, is my 'rivalry' with Bismarck, which, as I prove in the second part of this work, never entered my mind; another is my 'hostility' towards him. I was his opponent, not in principle, not constantly, and least of all personally; but only when his actions threatened the interests placed under my care. I found him personally

sympathetic, and our mutual relations could, at times, not have been better. In a letter written by him to me in 1871, and which obtained a great deal of publicity,* he says; 'I always respected in Your Excellency my most unbiassed and amiable opponent.' It is not for me to judge whether I was amiable, though I am conscious of desiring to be so; but that I was unbiassed I can safely aver; and I hope that the reader will find the historian as unbiassed as Prince Bismarck once found the Minister and the Imperial Chancellor.

It may be asked how it was that this 'rivalry' and 'hostility' were not only invented but firmly believed. It is always difficult to prove how such rumours arise, but I know where this rumour arose: in no other quarter than in Berlin and Germany.

One of those angels blowing trumpets, such as are seen in pictures of the Day of Judgment, who are sent out from time to time by Prince Bismarck to appal every miscreant who dares to rebel against his omnipotence, or whom he unjustly suspects of intending to rebel, is the anonymous author of a book that appeared recently under the title of 'Twelve Years of German Policy.' I will not reveal who he is, but I will only hint that I have been told that his name is as long as his title. It is stated in that work among other things that Prince Bismarck once said in a confidential circle that in estimating the qualities of

* As proved by the following verses of the Berlin Comic Paper, the 'Kladderadatsch':—

'He praises Count Beust as an unbiassed foe
And as the most amiable man he doth know:
Since both at Gastein for their feud made amends,
We see that the Prince is not spoilt by his friends.'

his enemies, he first deducts their vanity; but that when he did so with me, nothing remained. No one can claim to have a full knowledge of himself, and I must therefore leave that reproach unrefuted; but if I really possess that weakness, to whom is it due? To Prince Bismarck himself and his attendant spirits.

So long as I was Minister simultaneously with Bismarck, first in Saxony, and then in Austria, and even when I was Ambassador in London and Paris, nothing could happen in Germany that was unpleasant to Prussia without a clamour being raised in the German papers about 'Beust's intrigues.' Thus, after the political world of London and Paris had discovered by personal acquaintance that I had some ability, English and French journalists took it into their heads that I was a most dangerous enemy, and the only one whom Bismarck dreaded. Under such circumstances vanity would be excusable. But what I never understood was that in the quarters where these insinuations originated it was not understood that there is only one cure for vanity—total silence.

Now we come to Prussia at the Bundestag.

CHAPTER XI

1851–1859

PRUSSIA AT THE BUNDESTAG

In a former chapter I mentioned that at the time when I was Saxon Minister in London, the Duc de Broglie, father of the present Duke, was my colleague as French Ambassador. At that time, towards the end of 1847, Lamartine's 'Histoire des Girondins' had just appeared, a book which as thoroughly prepared the Revolution of February as if Lamartine had intended to avenge himself with it for the malicious pun made by Louis Philippe at his expense. He was a native of Macon, the celebrated wine district of Burgundy; and Louis Philippe used to call him 'le vain (vin) de Macon,' the vain man of Macon. When somebody said, 'After all, it is a bad book,' the Duc de Broglie retorted: 'No; it is not a bad book, but it is a bad action.'

I am inclined to say the same of Poschinger's 'Preussen am Bundestage.'

Far from calling it a bad book, I was grateful for its appearance, in spite of its attacks* on me, and this for two reasons. In the first place I discovered in it the confirmation of the view I had long entertained of the original and permanent tendency of Prince Bismarck's German policy, which was, under pretence of defending Prussia, strongly aggressive towards Austria. In pursuing this policy he did nothing more and nothing worse than others before him, with this difference, that he carried it out with more ability and success than his predecessors. But, in the interest of historical truth, it should not be said that Austria was the attacking party. On the other hand, I can only welcome a precedent which must be of general application. Prince Bismarck's condemnation of La Marmora's 'Più de luce' falls to the ground after the appearance of a publication which appeared either by his order or with his consent.

I therefore do not write with any personal feeling when I recall the above words of the Duc de Broglie. I do not quote them to characterise Poschinger's book as a whole, however great may be the temptation to find an analogy between a work that, like Lamartine's, strives to excite ill-will as to the future, and one that, like Poschinger's, endeavours to poison the reader's mind as to the past.

* I leave those of a personal nature unnoticed. But to show the spirit of the book, I must allude to a statement made under the date of January 1856, that in the previous year I had applied in vain for the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, that very Grand Cross which I had received three years previously. Of course the heading is: 'Beust's Application for a French Order.'

I use the expression, a 'bad action,' not in the sense that the action was criminal, but that it was ungenerous to publish the frequent attacks, far exceeding the just limits of dispassionate criticism, made by Bismarck when Prussian envoy at the Bundestag on some of his colleagues, especially the Austrian envoy who was President. These attacks are now placed before the public as a spicy dish, in spite of the obviously defenceless position of the persons attacked.

Baron Prokesch, Thun's successor, is constantly accused of untruthfulness from the moment he entered on the duties of his office, and a whole chapter is filled with the alleged irregularities of the Presiding envoy and the subservience to Austria of the envoys of Saxony and Würtemberg (12th February, 8th March, 30th May, 1853). Later on (23rd March, 1855) occurs the serious complaint that Prokesch made statements about the debates in the Bundestag to the foreign representatives, and in particular to those of France and England.

With regard to the footing on which Prokesch stood with Bismarck, both may have had a good deal to complain of each other. As Prince Bismarck told me in 1862 at the time of his short Parisian Embassy, during a little dinner at a restaurant, that it was a blessing to him to pass some years with 'good-natured' Gortschakoff after all that he had suffered in Frankfort from Prokesch, so Prokesch assured me, when I visited him at Frankfort in October 1855 at the time of his appointment as Austrian Minister at Constantinople, that the prospect of negotiating with

the wise Ali instead of with Bismarck seemed to him like an Oriental vision of the blessed.

However we may judge Prokesch, nobody can deny that he was gifted with originality and brilliant wit, and if his Frankfort despatches were published they would find a grateful public.

When Poschinger's book was issued, Prince Bismarck knew quite well that neither Dresden nor Stuttgart (Munich had been wisely spared) would presume to publish the reports of their envoys in order to refute his assertions, and that Vienna would not consider it opportune to make public the despatches of the Austrian Presiding envoy at the Bundestag.

If I see an opponent before me tied hand and foot, I do not give him a blow in the face. I cannot therefore regard the proceeding as praiseworthy.

Perhaps it may be retorted that the persons attacked are no longer living. But they have left sons and other relatives to whom their memory is dear, and there are Governments which preserve the recollection and the honour of the past in spite of the change of persons and systems.

If I leave this, which I may call the social aspect of Bismarck's despatches of that date, and turn to their political significance, this is to be found, as I have already hinted, in the very obvious and persistent tendency of representing Austria as menacing Prussia. Bismarck may have thought it well to impress this view on Frederick William IV, who preserved a lingering attachment to Austria in spite of Bunsen and Radowitz. Bismarck always

pursued his object of loosening the old Confederation, and of cutting off all communication between Germany, or at least the North of Germany, and Austria, thus bringing it in close connection with Prussia. Those who know as well as I do what took place between Vienna and the German Central States in the time between 1851 and 1856, and who are versed in the instructions given by Austria for the Frankfort sittings of the Bundestag, can hardly fail to be amused on reading the description of the Macchiavellian intrigues of the Cabinet of Vienna at the very time when the Governments of the Central States were as often, if not oftener, at variance with Vienna as with Berlin. During the Crimean War Bismarck himself admits that they were always opposed to Austria. Wherever he turned, he heard complaints of the incapacity of Count Buol. But Poschinger speaks of Austrian 'intimidation' (March 1855). If I look back on my three Austrian envoys at Dresden: the excellent, business-like, precise, but always courteous and considerate Count Kuefstein—my friend Metternich—and the gentle and cautious Baron Werner—I ask myself whether I have lost my memory, for I cannot for the life of me recollect any Austrian 'intimidation.' And yet some such effect must have been produced, as Bismarck mentions a 'vacillation of the Central States,' of which we never heard anything.

Oh, those wicked Central States and their Ministers, the despicable 'Rheinbündler!'* Because Pfordten and I went to the Paris Exhibition and

* See note on p. 107.

were received on that occasion by the Emperor, Herr von Bismarck was quite convinced that we were reporting to foreign Powers 'that the Confederation could not resist a real external danger' (26th April 1856). But when later on Count Bismarck proceeded to Biarritz to have an interview with Napoleon III, the affairs of Germany were of course not in question.

In the pursuit of his idea of the proposed revival of the Rhenish Confederation, which was really a hallucination, but which did not prevent him from proposing to Prussia a separate alliance with France (15th April, 1856), he makes a remark in one of his reports (26th April, 1856) to which we may justly take exception: 'The Emperor Napoleon seems to have received with polite reserve the *acte de commission* of Count Buol—the desire of Austria to have the honour of being the first State of the Rhenish Confederation, if only Prussia could be thereby degraded to the second or even third place in the Confederation.' But a thorough refutation is called for of the view, which he develops at great length, that if France had threatened Germany, the German Princes would rather have joined France than have sacrificed their independence by remaining in the Austro-Prussian camp. In 1840, when the attitude of France was especially warlike, all the German Governments rose as one man against her; and in 1859 (I do not speak of Prussia, but of the 'untrustworthy Central States') all were ready to proceed against France. I am certain that if Prussia had been attacked, the attitude of the German Princes would have been the same.

But in truth it is neither generous nor wise to harp upon the Rhenish Confederation. How did it originate? Did the Princes of the Rhenish Union rush into the arms of the French Conqueror? After the battle of Ulm the rulers of southern Germany had no choice. Nor had the Elector of Saxony, after he had joined his troops to those of Prussia at Jena, where they were defeated together, and after the Prussian fortresses had fallen—although not under the command of Princes of the Rhenish Union—and there was no longer a Prussia to ally one's self with. Moreover, the then King of Saxony refused to take Napoleon's offer of Silesia—perhaps unwisely, for he would probably have obtained more in the end if he had had more to give up.

An attentive reader of Bismarck's Frankfort reports will look in vain for any serious attempt on his part to come to an understanding with his Austrian colleagues. On the contrary, on the 7th April 1852 he rejected a proposal made by Count Thun with the view of establishing complete equality between the two States as regards their position in Germany. Nor is it sufficiently understood that it was against her interest and her wish that Austria consented to the exclusion of her non-German possessions from the Confederation. We find everywhere that difficulties were raised by the secret hostility which depreciated the advantages of the Austrian Alliance, and refused to recognize Austria's right to freedom of action and to the choice of an alliance with another power. On the 26th April 1856, Bismarck even asserted that war with Austria was inevitable

because it would be useful, as 'according to the policy of Vienna, Germany is too narrow for us both, and Austria is the only State to which we can lose or from which we can gain.' This was said eleven years before the event. Men are apt to predict what they desire. Prince Bismarck may now boast of his foresight; he may also boast of having directed the events he predicted the way he wished them to occur, though it was the merest chance that they turned out as they did.

I always try to find excuses for those whom I condemn. I have done this in the case of Prince Schwarzenberg's great sins of omission, and I will endeavour to do the same in that of Prince Bismarck's small sins of commission.

I shall throw light in a following chapter, on the fact—'infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem'—that in Austria people always rated appearance higher than reality. I do not know where Bismarck got his information about Austria's attempts to bully the other States of the Confederation; but I have had better opportunities of observation than others in this matter, and I can safely assert that the Central States never felt the effects of the aggressiveness and tyranny thus ascribed to her. It is true that those States and the members of the Assembly at Frankfort were sometimes offended at her assumption of superiority. She had an idea, as false as it was injurious, that her Presidency over the Assembly entitled her to preside over the Bund, and that this was an inviolable attribute of the Imperial Court. This idea prompted the demand of Count Buol, mentioned in the report

of the 14th February 1856, that when he was passing through Frankfort the envoys at the Bundestag should pay him the first visit. Prokesch and Rechberg held the same view, and carried it out with equal obstinacy and with equally injurious effects. The last Austrian Presiding envoy, Baron Kübeck, abandoned this absurd pretension, but it was then too late.

It has often been asserted, but falsely, that under Prince Schwarzenberg Austria abandoned her old traditional policy towards Prussia, and that instead of maintaining her former attitude, based on the equality of the two powers, she began to play a domineering part derogatory to Prussia. On the contrary, if anything of this kind ever happened it was before 1848, and especially in the period between 1830 and 1840, when Prussia was in the habit of taking Prince Metternich's opinion on every occasion, a practice not forced upon her by Austria, but perfectly spontaneous. That was the time when Herr von Bismarck's predecessors in Frankfort were accustomed to look up to Count Münch as their chief.

From that date we can trace a certain dictatorial tone in the communications of Vienna—a tone which I often deplored, and which was expressed only too pointedly by the elegant and incisive style of Baron Biegeleben. Austria made the mistake of arrogating to herself a show of power which she did not really possess, while the other Confederate States wrongly looked upon a mere fault of manner as indicating a dangerous assumption of authority.

Another excuse for the harsh and generally unfounded charges in Bismarck's reports may be found in the circumstance that it is a peculiarity of the Prussian character to be very sharp sighted in perceiving the misdeeds of others and very blind to one's own.

In 1878 I visited the Paris Exhibition. King George of Hanover had died there shortly before, and I was told the following anecdote: A Secretary of the Austrian Embassy, meeting a Secretary of the German Embassy who was his friend, happened to remark that the King's death would make a deep impression on the Emperor William. 'Oh!' was the reply, 'I am certain that the Emperor has forgiven him!' These words so staggered the Austrian that he could only say: 'I beg your pardon.'

CHAPTER XII

1852

THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS AT DRESDEN

I MUST now relate my interview with the Emperor Nicholas during his short visit to Dresden in 1852. I had never seen him before, but had heard a great deal about him.

How quickly men and events are forgotten in our kaleidoscopic age! Thirty years have barely elapsed since the death of Nicholas, and yet it seems as though he had lived and reigned in the last century. Next to Napoleon I, there was no sovereign who was so much adored, feared, and hated as the Emperor Nicholas. The resources of power which he had at his command were not to be compared in the remotest degree with those of the present Emperor of Germany; yet the influence on European politics of the latter was far less than that possessed for twenty years by the Emperor Nicholas. During my Berlin

mission I saw that he was regarded in the Prussian capital and at most of the German Courts as a superior being. At Vienna the necessity of his friendship was a fundamental maxim ; even England owned that he had a right to claim a certain superiority ; and the country that had most reason to complain of him, France, did her utmost to keep him in good humour. All this came under my personal observation in all the German capitals except Vienna, and it will be easily understood, therefore, with what interest I looked forward to a meeting with the man who at that time held so prominent a place among the European sovereigns.

The Emperor Nicholas arrived at Dresden in the evening from Vienna, and continued his journey to Warsaw the following day, after visiting King Frederick Augustus in his Weinsberg villa, on which occasion I first saw him.

The Emperor was staying at the Russian Embassy, and I was shown into his study. I had heard enough of his bearing and appearance to know that his manners were anything but those of a savage despot ; but the easy and dignified amiability with which he received me went far beyond my expectations. With a few complimentary words he invited me to sit down, and he only dismissed me after half-an-hour's conversation, during which we talked on various subjects relating to many countries besides Saxony. I may say that I scarcely remember ever having seen a more attractive figure than the Emperor Nicholas, with his large, blue, clear, and penetrating eye.

He spoke of his visit to Vienna, and of his friend-

ship for the Emperor Francis Joseph, whom he called more than once 'ce cher Empereur.' His opinion of Frederick William IV was less favourable. 'Voyez-vous, avec mon beau-frère de Prusse je ne parle plus politique, avec ses idées il est tellement au-dessus de moi que je me fais l'effet d'un imbécile à coté de lui.'

I cannot forget our conversation on the burning question of the day. 'Louis Napoléon,' said Nicholas, 's'est fait Président, il se fera Empereur. Bien, nous le reconnaîtrons, mais comme dynastie, jamais!' I ventured to differ from him. I observed that it appeared to me that it was contrary to the monarchical principle to admit that anybody had a right to have himself proclaimed Emperor. It was better, I thought, that he who did so should be able to show a dynastic origin, as was the case with Louis Napoleon, and the designation of 'Napoleon III' therefore appeared to me preferable to that of 'Louis Napoleon.'

The Emperor was not to be convinced. If I had been able to convert him to my views how differently things would have turned out! There would have been no question about calling him 'mon bon frère,' and no Crimean War.

I have advised Russia on two occasions, first on the subject of Napoleon III, and afterwards on that of the Black Sea. I was not listened to, still less was I thanked for my advice.

CHAPTER XIII

1853–1854

MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR AND OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—DEATH OF KING FREDERICK AUGUSTUS AND ACCESSION OF KING JOHN.—THE CRIMEAN WAR.

Nothing was farther removed from my wishes and thoughts than to undertake the department of the Interior instead of that of Public Worship and Instruction; but after this change had been brought about by the resignation of my colleague Friesen, a resignation I did not at all desire, it became of decided value to me. As head of the two departments which were politically most important, I became, though not the premier, the leading Minister in the Cabinet. In Saxony the Minister of the Interior was at the same time Minister of Police, Commerce, and Agriculture. I had indeed begun my career by serving in the internal Administration, but I had afterwards lived for thirteen years abroad. That my nomination as head

of so extensive a department was attended with no disadvantage is to be attributed to my good fortune in being supported by most capable officials. To this moment I have not ceased to think with gratitude of the four heads of departments, Kohlschütter, Weinlig, Körner, and von Zahn, and this reminiscence is made more gratifying by the certainty that they never had cause to complain of me, but always placed entire confidence in my guidance. Indeed, throughout my career I always succeeded in gaining the affections of my subordinates. That in later years, in spite of the complete change of circumstances, many of them came to see me whenever I visited Dresden, was as honourable to them as it was gratifying to me.

The year 1854 became momentous to Saxony by the sudden death of King Frederick Augustus and the accession of King John.

It is well-known that Frederick Augustus met with a fatal accident during one of his favourite tours in the Tyrolese Alps; and the tragedy, or rather the fatality of his end consisted in the fact that he, so fearless and experienced as a mountaineer, was killed by a fall from his carriage. I was at that time at Munich, where there was an Industrial Exhibition, and had taken leave of the King at Possenhofen, whence he proceeded to the Tyrol. I cannot describe the shock I felt when two days afterwards, early in the morning, I was called from my bed by the dreadful news. I hurried to Dresden. The journey was most trying, independently of its sad associations, as the cholera had just broken out at Munich and the trains were all filled to overflowing. In a former

chapter I have mentioned my personal relations with King Frederick Augustus, and I therefore need not say how deeply and keenly I felt the blow.

The coffin arrived with the remains soon after my return to Dresden. King John and his two sons followed on foot from the station to the Catholic Church, where the body was placed on a bier to be interred in the family vault on the following day. In my capacity of Kammerherr I demanded the honour of being allowed to watch the body during the night.

From the first King John bestowed upon me that confidence and favour which I enjoyed without interruption until my resignation. As Crown Prince he used to take part in all the sittings of the Cabinet when the King presided, and on these occasions, as well as in his capacity of member of the First Chamber, in whose debates he took an active part, he had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with me. The position in which I stood towards him could not be more suitably described than in the letter he addressed to me on my resignation in 1866, which will be found in its proper place in these Memoirs.

That King John was a man of eminent scientific attainments, and even of profound learning, is well known. King Frederick William IV used to call him 'my brother-in-law the Professor.' But few knew as I did the rare modesty that was united to such wealth of intellect. He had paid slight attention to foreign affairs before his accession, and this may account for the authority he gave me in such matters. But even in home affairs, although he had a thorough knowledge of the law, and was immeasurably my

superior in that respect, he never made me feel his superiority.

It is almost incredible, but no less true (my former colleague Friesen mentions it in his Memoirs), that the accession of such a sovereign, who seemed of all men the most fitted for the crown, and who was deservedly popular during his reign, was regarded in the country with a certain degree of alarm—a feeling for which a possible explanation may be found in a peculiarity of the Saxon character.

There are two words that cannot be spoken in the presence of a Saxon without his becoming violently excited: 'Jew' and 'Jesuit.' Within a comparatively recent period the Jews were forbidden to enter certain Saxon towns, especially those of the mountain districts. It was, I suppose, thought impossible for a Jew to pass a lump of ore without putting it in his pocket! The Jesuits, too, were looked upon as bugbears and ogres. When the Constitution was established with the concurrence of the old Diets in 1831, the latter demanded the insertion of a special provision forbidding the introduction of Jesuits, although at that time there was no monastic order in the country except the two harmless nunneries in the Lausitz.

During the whole course of his reign King John never exposed himself to the reproach of religious intolerance. He never interfered with the affairs of the Protestant Church; and with regard to the affairs of his own Church he showed such reserve that I was once obliged to take its part against him. But as a Prince he had never concealed his Catholic faith. It was without his interference or even knowledge (for

what was done was not through the instrumentality of the Cabinet, but through Ministers of State entrusted with religious affairs) that the Government assumed a defensive attitude against 'German Catholicism' in the years subsequent to 1840,—that very 'German Catholicism,' the hollowness of which became apparent later on, but which at that time had enthusiastic adherents. Public opinion in Saxony then believed that the Jesuits were at the back of the Government, and this was the cause of the disturbances at Leipzig in 1845, which were partly directed against the Prince. A mistaken notion was thus spread that the Prince was intolerant in religious matters; and this was even believed in Court circles, where Protestant intolerance was not unrepresented. And yet it was well known that he had confided the education of his eldest son, Prince (now King) Albert, to a Protestant, who was even a zealous partizan of his Church. The cry of the 'Jesuit' is in certain circumstances raised as frequently as that of the 'Rheinbündler.'*

At the time of the accession of King John many important questions had to be dealt with. In internal affairs, the reorganisation of the judicial and administrative authorities, and in foreign affairs the attitude of the Germanic Confederation with regard to the Crimean War, claimed full attention.

With regard to the latter point I must here refer to the part of my Memoirs which comprises the period of my tenure of office in Austria, and was completed before I began to write the earlier part. I

* See note on p. 107.

there discuss in detail the policy of Austria during the Crimean War, which throws considerable light on the doings of the German Confederation and its various members at that period.

I have already questioned the historical foundation of the saying attributed to Prince Schwarzenberg: 'Avilir la Prusse d'abord et la démolir ensuite.' I do not know whether he spoke the other words attributed to him: 'Nous étonnerons le monde par notre ingratitude'; but I have less reason to doubt it. The realisation of the idea as carried out after his death, did not show that Austria's ingratitude was of much use to her; and the saying attributed to Prince Schwarzenberg gave Prince Gortschakoff an opportunity, when, much to Austria's chagrin, the new Kingdom of Italy was recognized, of wittily remarking: 'Nous étonnerons le monde par notre reconnaissance.'

I fully believe that Prince Schwarzenberg thought that the service performed by Russia in Hungary, which was as beneficial to her as the help afforded to the Saxons was to Prussia, should not in any way have hampered Austria in the independent pursuit of her interests. But practically he would have conducted affairs in another manner than his successor, to whom Metternich's saying of the knife that pricks without cutting proved only too applicable. Prince Schwarzenberg was a man of action, and if he had lived, Austria would, as soon as the Pruth had been crossed in 1853, have occupied Little Wallachia, and would have declared herself ready to withdraw her troops so soon as Russia should do likewise. This

might at first have been felt at St Petersburg as an unexpected blow; but lasting resentment would have been much less probable than after making Austria's late friend and ally drink the bitter cup gradually to the dregs. War would scarcely have been declared; and even if it had broken out, it would have produced less division and coldness in the end than a display of military power which, though inactive itself, paralyzed the arm of Austria's neighbour while she was engaged in war with others. This it is that prevented me from approving Buol's policy; for I was sufficiently acquainted with the state of affairs at Vienna to know that the opposition to Russia would be confined within the limits of certain considerations, and would therefore not advance beyond half measures.

The campaign, though bloodless, was not without its victims. It is said that nearly 50,000 men died in the hospitals; and the national debt was increased by 500,000,000 florins. It is well known how France and England thanked Austria and Italy for services without which Sebastopol would perhaps never have been taken. And Austria was patient enough to suffer Sardinia to join her troops to those of the Western Powers, with the transparent design of obtaining at the Paris Congress a hearing for her grievances against Austria and the position of the sixth of the Great Powers! The Austrian policy of those days appears to me almost incredible. If anything could make one judge it leniently, it would be the fact that the Vienna newspapers were full of enthusiasm in its praise. Zang in the *Presse*,

Varrens in the *Lloyd*, and Kuranda, for whom I had so much esteem, in the *Ostdeutsche Post*, all joined in the chorus and looked down contemptuously on Prussia and the Confederation. How often later on, when the Vienna press was full of dreary articles about the Concordat, the weakness of Reaction, and so on, did I remember how in those days they loved to talk of the 'majestic power' of Austria!

Instead of the policy that has been condemned by events, Austria could easily have obtained a guarantee for her Italian possessions from Prussia and the Confederation, if she had chosen to keep clear of the half alliance with the Western Powers, and to arrange with Prussia and the Confederation for mutual but decided neutrality. The Prussian envoy at the Bundestag was far from thinking of such an arrangement, but Frederick William IV entertained the idea very seriously. I was able to convince myself of this more than others, as King John was in correspondence with his royal brother-in-law in Berlin, and showed me his letters, the perusal of which gave me much enjoyment, so clever and witty were they. In those days, Dresden and Berlin were on the best of terms, and the King's views were not crossed by Herr von Manteuffel. That the King only now displayed this partiality to Austria is to be ascribed to the fact that Radowitz was no longer living, and that Bunsen was already politically dead.

The Central States, whether they gravitated towards the idea of a Rhenish Confederation or to the Western Powers, looked at things more or less from the same point of view as we did in Saxony. Thus there

was soon complete harmony when the Ministers met in Conference at Bamberg. Bavaria was represented by Pfordten, Saxony by me, Würtemberg by Neurath, Hanover by Lenthe, Electoral Hesse by Mayer, the Grand Duchy of Hesse by Dalwigk, and Nassau by Wittgenstein. I was entrusted with the composition of a note to be addressed to the Governments of Prussia and Austria, the immediate subject of which was the invitation we had received from both Governments to join the vague Austro-Prussian Treaty of April; but the Note was also intended to express the unanimous views of the various Governments on the pending question.

Berlin was at first inclined to look with contempt on the Bamberg Assembly and its Note, but it was soon perceived that it contained an offer of support which would be very acceptable to Prussia, and a few months later Pfordten and I were welcome guests at Berlin. If Vienna received the Note in a cool, though not unfriendly, manner, it aroused in England, on the contrary, the greatest anger, and Lord Clarendon, the Foreign Secretary, thought it well to give vent to his feelings in a despatch that was sent only to Dresden, not to the other Governments represented at Bamberg. I lost no time in rebutting this attack, which I considered an unjustifiable interference in the internal affairs of the German Confederation, by a despatch to the Saxon Ambassador in London.*

This despatch was received with joy by my Bamberg colleagues; but it was not well received by the German press, owing to the sympathy which

* See Appendix (A).

at that time prevailed for the Western Powers. Prince Gortschakoff, then Ambassador at Vienna, abundantly praised what he called a 'chef d'œuvre de fine ironie,' not dreaming that I would give him a second edition of it five years later when he attempted to dictate to the German Governments how they should behave during the Italian War.

The opinion of the Prussian Ambassador at the Bundestag, Herr von Bismarck, on this subject is not without interest. In the supplementary fourth volume of Poschinger's 'Preussen am Bundestag,' there is a letter from Herr von Bismarck to the Minister von Manteuffel, in which he says: 'Have you read Beust's London despatch? It is very well written, and would be still better if Saxony were stronger.' Passing over the touch of malice in these words, one perceives in them the utter lack of appreciation of what the Confederation should and could have been. The Note was not the answer of the Saxon Government as such, but the rejection of the unwarrantable interference of a Foreign State in the affairs of the Confederation, which the Minister of 'little Saxony' was bound to express, as the Foreign Government in question had addressed itself exclusively to him. Whether Saxony was large or small was of no consequence. But the more reason have I to value the circumstance that my despatch had the honour of being printed in the fourth volume of Poschinger's work, although Saxony has not increased in size since it was written.

CHAPTER XIV

1854–1856

CONTINUATION OF THE CRIMEAN WAR.—AN EXPLANATION.—AUSTRIA ON THE VERGE OF WAR.—THE SECRET DESPATCH OF JANUARY.—GASTEIN AND COUNT BUOL.—MY FIRST MEETING WITH NAPOLEON III.—MY CORRESPONDENCE WITH COUNT NESSELRODE.—MISSION OF BARON SEEBACH TO ST PETERSBURG.—THE PEACE OF PARIS.

It is not my task to narrate the various episodes of the Crimean War, which are still deeply impressed on the minds of my contemporaries. But it may be of interest to know the circumstances which gave me opportunities of close observation, sometimes even of influential action, and of insight into many less known things. In the last respect what follows is not without value.

It is well known that the Turkish Declaration of War and the appearance of the Western Powers on the scene of hostilities took place after St Petersburg had rejected the compromise formulated by the Conference of Vienna, which was intended to open

an honourable retreat for Russia. The Emperor Nicholas has been most severely reproached for this rejection, but in reality he was not to blame. In a former chapter I have mentioned my personal relations with the Russian Imperial Chancellor, Count Nesselrode. After his resignation, which closely followed the Peace of Paris, he came again to Dresden, and we frequently spoke of the past. He once told me that the Emperor Nicholas was inclined to accept the Vienna proposals, and that he (Nesselrode) had prevented him from doing so, as he considered them derogatory to the imperial dignity. I do not think that this revelation can injure the memory of that statesman, for whom I had the highest esteem, and who served two Emperors, Alexander I and Nicholas, with signal merit. But as on the one hand I do not limit my judgments, which I hope are always impartial and accurate, so on the other I gladly seize every opportunity of refuting unjust charges against others. On the whole, public opinion has been unduly prejudiced against the Emperor Nicholas. Whether the present condition of Russia is the consequence of his system of Government, or whether it is not rather a proof that that system was necessary, is an open question; but it must not be forgotten, especially in Austria, that he was a decided enemy of all Panslavistic aspirations—which can unfortunately not be said of his successor. He did not close his eyes to the fact that a State governed by an absolute ruler could not possibly encourage revolutionary agitation in other countries without sowing its seeds in his own.

Alma and Inkerman had been fought; Sebastopol

was still in the first stage of a siege which lasted a year. It was at this time that the convention of December between Austria and the Western Powers, which was soon followed by the secret Austrian despatch of January to the German Central States, was concluded. Unfortunately it did not remain secret, for we find it minutely discussed in the report of the Prussian Ambassador at the Bundestag, Herr von Bismarck-Schönhausen. It is sad to remember that Austria, whose strongest weapon against Prussia's policy of exclusion was the rigid maintenance of the constitution of the Bund, frequently violated it herself. That despatch of the 14th of January 1855, signified a two-fold departure from the constitution: first, because it called upon certain German Governments to join in an act of war contrary to their duties as members of the Confederation; and secondly, because they were offered rewards for so doing at the expense of other members of the Confederation. Austria would scarcely have been inclined to cede to Bavaria a portion of the Tyrol, or to Saxony a portion of Bohemia, while neither Bavaria nor Saxony could have been in a position to profit by the acquisition of territory in Bessarabia or in Poland; thus compensation would have had to be found in Germany herself. I cannot sufficiently repeat that Austria never rated at its true value the considerate feeling entertained towards her by Frederick William IV, and it was owing to that feeling that Prussia did not derive greater advantage from the Viennese despatch above referred to. The impression produced by it in Government circles was lasting,

but unfortunately did not prevent Austria from combining with Prussia some years later in the Schleswig-Holstein affair, thereby again disregarding the constitution of the Bund, and sealing the doom of that body and her own.

It is worth mentioning that no German Government gave a detailed answer to the January despatch. In Dresden the Austrian offers were decidedly but politely rejected.

I endeavoured in the preceding chapter to prove that Austria's best policy would have been to oppose Russia by occupying the Daunbian Principalities before the interference of the Western Powers; or, this step not having been taken, to pursue a policy of neutrality jointly with Prussia and the Confederation. This might easily have been done, considering the views of Frederick William IV, without any arrangement with the Western Powers. Such a policy would naturally and incontestably have given Austria the leading part. Nor would it have excluded the possibility of intervention if necessary. But it would only have been of use, if it had been entered upon at the right moment, and not after Austria had during a whole year gradually departed from it and had daily come nearer to the verge of war. If Austria had then decided to take part in the war, its action would have been more intelligible, and the January despatch shows that such a decision was seriously contemplated. It is not uninteresting to read Bismarck's despatches of that period. He had in view the eventuality of an Austro-Russian War, and the possibility of a Prusso-Russian Alliance. Of this

last scheme I say nothing; but I do not think that a constitutional appeal from Austria to the Confederation would have remained without effect.

Among the most marked characteristics of the Emperor Francis Joseph is a never-failing unselfishness. I have on more than one occasion had proofs of this both while I was Minister in Austria and previously. That the Emperor refrained from using his influence in a warlike sense during the Eastern crisis, proves his great conscientiousness, for it can scarcely be doubted that had he followed his personal inclinations, Austria would undoubtedly have made war. It was a great temptation for a young man who was a thorough soldier, and who commanded an efficient and victorious army.

The question of Austria taking part in the war was soon after postponed, and it would only have become acute if Sebastopol had held out longer. Late enough, in September 1855, Sebastopol was taken, and, as chance would have it, it was through me that Count Buol first got the news. The Minister of Foreign Affairs had taken a holiday with his colleague, Baron Bach, in the mountains, and had given orders that no despatches should be forwarded to him. We met in the evening in the little market-town of Golling. I came from Gastein, and had read there in the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* the news of the fall of Sebastopol. My intention was to start early next morning, but Count Buol surprised me at six o'clock with a protracted visit, which clearly showed me once more the Austrian point of view. I remember two remarkable statements which he made

during that interview. The first was that Austria was already the possessor of the Danubian Principalities (she had them indeed in her possession, but she had soon to give them up); the second was that Austria would never wage war against France.

Soon after that meeting (it was in October 1855) I went to Paris to see the first Paris Exhibition. Minister von der Pfordten followed my example, and we met there without previous appointment. At St Cloud we had audiences of the Emperor Napoleon, and were frequently invited to dinner.

I had seen the Emperor eight years before, as the fugitive prisoner of Ham, under very different circumstances in London. I remarked in a former chapter that he was blackballed by three votes in an English club in 1847, and that a year afterwards he received six million votes. On this occasion also I was struck by the contrast between the past and the present; my mind reverted to the evening when I saw Prince Louis Napoleon at the house of the Duke of Beaufort making fruitless attempts to be introduced to a Royal Princess. The Emperor was in uniform, a costume which never suited him, as he was very broad and his legs were very short. Many disadvantages of his personal appearance were compensated by his pleasing voice, which always attracted me in later years, and for the last time during his English exile after 1870. After dinner at St Cloud I had a lengthy interview with him while we were walking together up and down the billiard room. On my way to Paris I had stayed a few days at Frankfort, and had had an interview with Baron Brunnow, Russian Ambassador

to the Bundestag. Brunnow, of whom I shall have further occasion to speak, was Russian Ambassador in London until the Crimean War, and he returned to his post when peace was restored. I had known him there when I was the Saxon Minister. He told me that he had been instructed to the effect that his Government would gladly make peace, but that it would not pay a war indemnity or relinquish territory. I was authorised to make use of this statement, and the Emperor Napoleon assured me that neither an indemnity nor cession of territory would be demanded if Russia would concede the neutrality of the Black Sea. As soon as I was back in Dresden, I wrote a long letter to Count Nesselrode and urged him to proceed in accordance with the French views. I pointed out that Russia could give way with regard to the Black Sea, as it was a demand so utterly untenable that it would die a natural death, it being against the nature of things to forbid an empire of eighty million inhabitants to have ships of war in its own waters. 'I am positive,' I added, 'that ten or twelve years will not elapse before someone demands the abolition of that article.' I did this myself. Twelve years later, as Austrian Minister, I suggested that the provisions of the Treaty of Paris relative to the Black Sea should be abolished; only as a compensation, it is true, and without conceding to Russia the right of withdrawing from it of her own will.

The draft of my letter cannot unfortunately be found in the Dresden Archives. But Nesselrode's reply is still in existence, together with a letter written by me to the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, Baron

Budberg, and a second letter to Count Nesselrode.* It will be seen that the reply, though detailed and polite, declined to entertain my suggestion. Meanwhile Vienna hit upon the idea, to my mind as pernicious to Austria as to Russia, of proposing a cession of territory in Bessarabia. Had this cession been limited to the west bank of the Danube, the plan might have been justified; but this was not the case, as it was a question of substituting an unnatural frontier for the natural one formed by the river Pruth. Nothing tended more seriously to aggravate the bitterness and hostility of Russia than this proposal, which Russia knew was not demanded by France or England, and to which she had finally to yield.

An attentive perusal of Count Nesselrode's reply to my letter will show how far Russia was from desiring peace even after the fall of Sebastopol. That she decided at last to accept the preliminaries of peace as arranged by Paris, London, and Vienna, is owing in no slight degree to the efforts of 'little Saxony.' At the express desire of Napoleon III, Baron Seebach, then Saxon Ambassador in Paris, and son-in-law of Count Nesselrode, was sent to St Petersburg to use his influence with the latter.

It was generally acknowledged in those days that his mission was a decided success. With it, my share in the negotiations resulting from the Crimean War came to an end. That the negotiators of the Peace of Paris soared to a height which I could not attain, caused me no regret. That peace will be regarded in the annals of diplomacy as a masterly example of how

* See Appendix (B).

to reverse the effects of a war and obtain in the future the very opposite of what a Treaty is intended to secure.

One of the most active promoters of the Treaty, the French Ambassador in Vienna, Baron Bourqueney, visited me on his return to the Austrian capital, and expressed his satisfaction in the following curious remark: 'Quand vous lisez ce Traité, vous vous demandez, quel est le vaincu, quel est le vainqueur?'

He was quite right. Whoever reads the Treaty of Paris without a knowledge of the events that preceded it, can only arrive at the conclusion that Russia was as victorious as the Western Powers, and that Turkey had repulsed the Russian attack of her own accord and without assistance. This may be praised as generosity, but from a political point of view it was a great blunder. After omitting to secure from Turkey, in return for the help given her, reforms alleviating the lot of the Christians under Turkish rule—instead of being satisfied with the mere gracious promise of the Sultan in this respect—the signatory Powers should at least have taken steps to secure the execution of their benevolent intentions. But the very peculiarity of this Treaty consisted in the fact that all parties acknowledged the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire as an European necessity, and guaranteed its territory (France, England, and Austria even doing so in special treaties); but that at the same time they all agreed not to interfere with the internal administration of that empire. The inevitable consequence was that when one of the signatory Powers threatened the existence of Turkey in 1877, the others did nothing, or rather could do nothing,

for its defence. The conduct of Turkey herself prevented their intervention: she had not kept her promises to her Christian subjects, and she had suspended the payment of the interest on her European loans. It would have been otherwise if the Powers had adopted the suggestion I made as Austrian Minister in 1867 for the revision of the Treaty of Paris in the sense of a European control over Turkey. The second part of my Memoirs enters more into detail on this subject.

If I have a neighbour, and I am anxious that his property should not fall into other hands, I may pledge myself to defend him; but in that case it would be monstrous that I should be denied the right of examining his affairs, and that he should be free to manage exactly as he liked. This, however, was the result of the notorious Ninth Article of the Treaty of Paris. It was a result that nobody expected, and that everybody could have foreseen. All the Powers except Russia observed the Ninth Article conscientiously, while Russia, who had a thousand means of evading it, pursued her intrigues with even less difficulty than before.

CHAPTER XV

1856–1858

YEARS OF POLITICAL TRANQUILLITY.—FESTIVITIES AT COURT, IN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES, AND AT MY HOUSE.—ILLUSTRIOUS VISITORS AT DRESDEN.—ILLNESS OF FREDERICK WILLIAM IV.—DEATH OF THE MINISTER ZSCHINSKI.—RESTORATION OF THE ALBRECHTSBURG.—MOURNING IN THE ROYAL FAMILY.

The only good effect produced by the Peace of Paris, as by all other European Treaties of Peace, was that condition of mind which the French term 'la détente.' This refreshing pause, which, alas! was not of long duration, made itself felt in German affairs by producing a cooler political temperature. The calm surface was somewhat ruffled by the Neufchâtel conflict, but this was only a transient disturbance.

Society at Dresden was at that time very brilliant. A number of foreign families of the highest position had come to the Saxon Capital, and the Diplomatic Corps had acquired two members whose birth, education, and fortune made them perfect representatives of

great Courts—Count Heinrich Redern, the envoy of Russia, and Prince Richard Metternich, the representative of Austria. Splendid balls were given at Court on the occasion of the marriage, at the close of 1856, of two of the King's daughters: Princess Margaret to the Archduke Carl Ludwig, and Princess Anne to the Hereditary Grand Duke of Tuscany. These balls were followed by others at my house, at Prince Metternich's, and at the residence of Prince Corsini, the envoy extraordinary of Tuscany. The latter made a deep impression upon me. A 'grand seigneur' from head to foot, he was the very ideal of an envoy. The ball he gave in the rooms of the 'Harmonie-Gesellschaft' was magnificent, but the bill was extravagant. He paid it at once, saying 'Mon cher, vous m'avez royalement écorché; je vous fais cadeau de cette épingle.' And thereupon he gave the man a valuable scarf-pin. Prince Corsini was a man of delightful manners, and I must not forget to mention that he was one of the few who remained faithful to the Grand-Duke in 1859.

In those days of political repose and animated social life I will not be considered frivolous for thinking that the time was suited for giving a fancy ball. I succeeded in getting together three hundred people in fancy costumes—no slight achievement for a town of the size of Dresden. My particular object in giving this fête was that money should circulate. It was completely attained, and the people were grateful to me for it. King John said when I asked him for the honour of his presence: 'I suppose I must appear as Augustus III,' an allusion to Count Brühl, to

whom I do not think I deserved to be compared. Of course the King, as well as the Crown Prince, appeared in uniform. Prince George made a great sensation by representing the Czar in the principal scene, 'Peter the Great at Saardam.' The last scene was a French Mission at Constantinople in the time of Louis XV. I was the Ambassador, Princess Metternich the Ambassadress, and the Sultan was represented by Count Edmund Zichy, a personage well-known to my Austrian readers. He was then in the prime of his manly beauty; his fair beard showed no streaks of silver, and his family diamonds looked magnificent with the old Turkish costume. In a speech which I addressed to the Sultan, I was guilty of making some bold allusions to the Peace of Paris, and the King said to the French Ambassador: 'Demain je m'attendrai à une note.' But the latter, Baron Rouen, a sincere and valued friend of mine, took my pleasantries in good part, and certainly did not report to his Government the following words which I remember using in my address to the Sultan: 'Nous garantissons l'indépendance de la Porte, afin de pouvoir un jour vous y mettre.'

In that same year, 1857, Dresden had many illustrious visitors. The Emperor Alexander came there from Weimar accompanied by Prince Gortschakoff. The Emperor Francis Joseph also came from Weimar, where he had met the Czar, and he witnessed the manœuvres of the Saxon troops, which formed the ninth Corps d'Armée of the Confederation in conjunction with those of the Electorate of Hesse

and the Duchy of Nassau—a circumstance that also brought the Elector of Hesse and the Duke of Nassau to the manœuvres. Shortly before, Frederick William IV paid his last visit to Pillnitz. He became ill after his return to Berlin, and never recovered.

I now return to the book of Dr Busch, which I value for its quotations; but this time with less gratitude. 'Our Chancellor' makes the following statement about the Congress of Sovereigns at Frankfort and the Baden interview between King William and the King of Saxony, who had proceeded to Baden at the desire of the assembled Princes: 'The King of Saxony, a man of great talents, and much esteemed by King William, endeavoured with the assistance of Herr von Beust so zealously and persistently to induce the King to go to Frankfort, that much anxiety was caused by the effect this produced on the nerves of King William, who was then in a very delicate state. Herr von Bismarck is said to have warmly reproached the Saxon Minister-President on this subject, to have reminded him under what circumstances Frederick William IV returned from his last visit to Dresden with the seeds of the illness which afterwards proved fatal, and to have earnestly urged him to spare the King and consider his health.'

I remember once having read that in former times, when the Italian cuisine left more to be desired than it does now, it sometimes happened that snakes were served at table instead of eels (but without deceiving the guests) under the name of 'Anguilla del bosco.' Here, too, we are served with 'a snake in

the grass.' The passage I have quoted necessarily implies that Frederick William IV was ill and nervous during his last visit at Dresden, like his successor at Baden. Now the visit at Dresden, which was limited to a dinner at Pillnitz, took place at a time when there was not the slightest discussion going on between Dresden and Berlin. I myself was not present at all, being on leave at Lindau: and the relations between the two royal brothers-in-law were so cordial, and so remote from any cause of quarrel, that any agitation injurious to health could not have arisen. As little could the dinner at Pillnitz have sown the seeds of the mortal illness which developed itself soon after in the form of insanity. If anything injured Frederick William, it was the rapid journey to Vienna which he made immediately after taking the waters at Marienbad—a most imprudent proceeding that caused him a serious indisposition when he arrived at Pillnitz.

The remaining part of Herr Busch's account of the Baden interview I shall elucidate when I come to the year 1863. He takes refuge behind the expression: 'said to have.' A conscientious historian does not deal with what persons are said to have done, but with what they really did. In another passage he mentions the saying recorded by Temme in his 'Reminiscences' as having been uttered by Bismarck in the Landtag of 1850 about his fellow Deputies: 'They are too stupid.' He says he asked the Prince as to the truth of the story, and that he was told in reply that it was quite unfounded. It would have been worth while to make a similar

enquiry in this case; the reply would have been the same.

I have but little to record of the year 1858. In Saxony, according to the Constitution, the Landtag met every three years, and not annually as before; but owing to the length of the session and the meeting of extraordinary Landtags, the interval between the sessions was not much more than a year. The Landtag of 1858 was very quiet, but that of 1861 showed the influence of the Italian War and of the 'National-Verein.' In the Landtag of 1858 the Government obtained from the Chambers a concession of particular value to the Royal House. There was a question of erecting new buildings for the celebrated factory of Meissen porcelain which had hitherto been located in the Albrechtsburg, and the removal of which was essential for the proper restoration of that ancient castle. I allude to this because it gives me the opportunity of mentioning an occurrence which throws some light on the King's political opinions. On the day when I had to speak in the Chamber, I was attacked with a troublesome cough; and in order to get rid of it as quickly as possible, I took some brandy before beginning my speech. This had at once the desired effect; I was enabled to speak for a considerable period, and I carried the demand of the Government against the motion of the Committee which proposed to grant a smaller sum. Some hours later, however, my cough became so much worse that I was confined to my bed in my villa at Laubegast, which was almost opposite to Pillnitz. The King visited me, and spoke with satisfaction of the issue of the

debate, adding that a condition had been imposed that no Catholic religious services should be held in the Castle, and that he would agree to this for the sake of religious peace. I protested against his yielding to so unreasonable a demand. 'Your Majesty,' I said, 'cannot possibly submit to be deprived of a right which all your subjects enjoy so long as they comply with legal regulations.' And that was the sovereign who was decried as a 'Jesuit'!

As I continued to be unwell, I proceeded to Gastein, which again proved its beneficial qualities. I there met the Archduke John, whom I had last seen in 1832, when he presided over the table d'hôte of the old 'Straubinger Hütte.' Soon after my return to Dresden, my colleague Zschinski died. His portfolio of Justice was transferred by the King to the Minister of Finance, Behr, with a diploma of nobility. The Finances were entrusted to the late Minister of the Interior, Baron von Friesen, to whose appointment, on being asked my opinion, I heartily agreed.

In the meantime the Royal Family had suffered a heavy loss, which was destined not to be the only one. The Archduchess Margaret died in the flower of her youth at Monza, and on leaving Gastein I was present at the sad but deeply impressive ceremony of her interment in the vault of the Church of the Capuchins in Vienna. The following year witnessed the death of the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Tuscany, who was married almost at the same time as her Austrian sister; then that of the Princess Sidonie; and finally that of her youngest sister, the Princess

Sophia, who was married to the Duke Charles Theodore of Bavaria. I could not but admire the King's religious resignation and undiminished attention to his royal duties, in the midst of the inexpressible grief he felt at the loss of so many who were dear to him.

CHAPTER XVI

1859

THE ITALIAN WAR.—MY MISSIONS TO BERLIN, MUNICH, KARLSRUHE, PARIS, LONDON, AND FRANKFORT.

The inevitable fruits of the Treaty of Paris,* which turned that which should have resulted from the Crimean War—the improvement of the internal condition of Turkey and the inviolability of the Ottoman Empire—into the exact reverse, only reached full maturity in 1877, but it did not require nearly so long a period to show Austria what had been attained by Count Buol's Eastern policy. A deeply-wounded and now watchful Russia, a pampered and now insolent Piedmont, a flattered and now dangerous France, a half-gained and now hesitating England, a neglected and now aspiring Prussia; such was the constellation in the Austrian sky two years after the Peace of Paris.

* Mr Gladstone one day said to me: 'The Crimean War was a great mistake.' 'Not in the least,' I replied, 'but the Treaty of Paris was a great blunder.'

Meanwhile the Concordat had been concluded. Count Buol was indeed less responsible for it than anyone else; but it was a bad card in his game, as it placed a dangerous weapon in the hands of Austria's enemies in Italy and Germany.

And yet the game would not have been such a very bad one—I am speaking of politics, not of military affairs—had there not been lamentable sins of commission and omission.

Not having a full knowledge of the negotiations carried on at Vienna, I do not wish to pass a precipitate judgment on the history of the events preceding the Italian War. It is my private conviction that if Vienna had been at the proper time more energetic and decided, she could have come to an arrangement with Turin as well as with Paris, and to a timely agreement with Prussia and the German Confederation. But she preferred a sulking policy, as useless to her as it was welcome to her enemies, and she looked upon the assistance of the Confederation as a matter of course. The attitude of Cavour at the Congress of Paris had been a sufficient warning to its Austrian members; and how much Vienna was alarmed even in 1857, is proved by the following circumstance: In that year King John paid a visit to his daughter, the Duchess of Genoa, at Stresa on the Lago Maggiore, and I followed him, having urgent affairs to transact. Cavour, with whom I had corresponded on business without knowing him personally, wished to speak to me, and indirectly proposed a rendezvous at Arona. I thought it wise to sound Vienna first, and the reply expressed such horror at

the idea that I thought it more prudent to decline the interview. Thus was I deprived of what would have been a most interesting reminiscence.

Useless and yet ominous bickerings between France and Austria continued until after the celebrated New Year's reception at the Tuileries. I have never understood how that event could have been glossed over. The position of Austria in 1866 after the battle of Königgrätz was certainly less powerful than her position in 1859 before the battle of Solferino; but if an Ambassador serving under me had been subjected to such an insult he would not have stayed another day at his post.* Of course he would not have been entirely withdrawn, only called away on leave. None of the neutral Powers could have looked upon such a proceeding as an aggression; but it would certainly have strengthened the feeling prevalent in Germany in favour of Austria and against Napoleon III as the disturber of peace. Those who care to take the trouble of convincing themselves that such a feeling existed, may find it expressed in almost all the German papers of that period.

As I have already said, so far as the history of the events preceding the Italian War is concerned, I can only speak of my own impressions at the time, and I am willing to be corrected if I am in error. The sins of commission and omission to which I have referred, however, are undoubted historical facts.

As in the Crimean, so also in the Italian War, I

* Everyone will now perceive that Europe unnecessarily bore much from Napoleon III that she had been compelled to bear from Napoleon I. Thus no notice was taken of the words spoken by the Emperor after the Italian War to the Diplomatic Corps: 'L'Europe a été injuste envers moi.'

was less remote from events than my German colleagues; and if I cannot boast of my efforts having been attended with success, it will at least be acknowledged that I stood up boldly for Austria, in accordance with the will of my royal master and the current of public opinion in Germany, which however did not survive the battle of Solferino. The reader can convince himself of what I say by my reports from Paris, London, and Frankfort, written in April 1859. Copies of them were given me without reserve in 1871 by my successor in Dresden, Baron Friesen,* and I think they are not without interest.

Early in 1859 the King's second son, Prince George of Saxony, was engaged to be married to Princess Maria of Portugal. The marriage was to take place at Lisbon in the spring, but it was to be preceded by an official courtship.

The King, wishing to give me an interesting holiday, confided this mission to me. It was originally intended that I should embark with the Prince (who had been staying at Florence), at Leghorn, and travel through the South of Spain to the Portuguese capital. The approaching crisis having altered my plans, I preferred passing through Paris and then going by sea; and I did not hesitate any longer when a Congress of the Powers was proposed. I never dreamt that Austria could decline the Congress, or, which amounted to the same thing, frustrate it by requiring that Piedmont should disarm without addressing a similar demand to the other powers.

* The private reports, being practically a continuation of the narrative, are placed at the end of this chapter. An official despatch from Dresden of this period is included with other historical documents in the Appendix (C.)

That was a sin of commission. The programme expressly stipulated that existing possession of territory should be maintained. But the excitement in Italy was so great that neither Victor Emmanuel nor Cavour had it in his power to prevent an explosion. In that case Europe, and not Austria only, would have had to intervene against the Revolution. All that Vienna would have had to contribute was the garrisons in the Papal States. And it was to this that Austria preferred war.

Before going to Paris, I went, in pursuance of the King's directions, to Berlin, where I saw the Prince of Prussia for the first time after his appointment as Regent. It was at the beginning of the new era, and although that era was not at all favourable to Austria, and could not have been so in any respect, my general impressions of the situation were satisfactory. The Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, then President of the Council of Ministers, declared, in the most decided manner, that there was no intention of burthening the country with untimely preparations for war, but that Austria would not be abandoned. In a letter written by the Prince in reply to the King of Saxony's congratulations on the marriage of the hereditary Prince, and of which I have a copy in my possession, he says: 'I was much interested in becoming more closely acquainted with Herr von Beust. We agreed in almost all our views, wishes and hopes, and if there have been some slight differences of opinion between us, they did not apply to the modes of action, but to the moment of action.' The Prince Regent said that so long as it was only a question of

attacking Sardinia, Prussia would have no occasion to interfere; but that things would assume a different aspect if France were to take part in the contest. He further remarked that Prussia had hitherto had no occasion to complain of France; he did not say this, however, as if he meant for that reason to refuse the assistance of Prussia to Austria, but gave me to understand that it would be given in any case. Count Schleinitz, who looked at me significantly when I met him in the corridors of the royal palace, though amiable as ever, spoke with much more reserve about the matter.

The death of my mother-in-law at Munich was the cause of my going first to that city, instead of proceeding straight to Paris. King Maximilian granted me a lengthy audience. He did not, much to my surprise, show himself very enthusiastic for the Austrian cause; and he asked me to do my best to prevent 'that stupid war.' About this time Pfordten, owing to internal complications, had resigned, and his successor had not yet entered on his duties, the consequences of which was an inaction very injurious to Austria. In all but Court circles Munich was dominated by an unbounded hatred of the French.* In Stuttgart I took my old friend, Minister Baron Hügel, into my compartment in the train, and at Karlsruhe I had a conference with him, with Dalwigk, who had come from Frankfort, and

* I saw after my arrival in Paris an old Munich friend, Count (afterwards Duke), von Tascher, who had attained the highest honours in his character of Frenchman and relative to the Imperial Family, but had still remained a thorough Bavarian. 'We Bavarians,' he said to me, 'will not bear anything from the cursed French, neither will we French bear anything from the infernal Bavarians.'

with the Baden Minister, Baron Meysenbug. When in later years I read and heard so much of Dalwigk's 'Rheinbündelei,'* my mind always reverted to that conference, in which my usually prudent Darmstadt colleague preached a crusade against the French with extraordinary warmth and confidence of success. He foresaw only one difficulty: who should have Alsace.

It was while this conference was going on that we received news from Vienna that an ultimatum had been sent to Turin. That was the second sin of commission. France now had the satisfaction of finding Sardinia the threatened instead of the threatening party, and Prussia that of finding Austria in a position of attack instead of in one of defence.

And nevertheless—it is scarcely credible, yet I remember it as if it were yesterday—I found on arriving in Paris the next day that the temper of that city was far from being cheerful or confident. The public was still under the impression that the Emperor's policy after Orsini's attempt had placed the country before the alternative of a dangerous war or a disgraceful retreat. The lower classes understood the question very imperfectly. A person who had been present at the Lyons railway station at the departure of some troops whose friends came to bid them farewell and to make them presents of wine and eatables, told me that the soldiers in the train exclaimed: 'Allons donner une bonne raclée à tous ces Italiens.'

I am not saying too much when I assert that I began to regret this audience, which had been arranged

* See note on page 107.

for me by the Saxon Ambassador at the Tuileries: not because of the difficulty of the task before me, but because it is not pleasant to visit a house where your host will probably not be in a good humour.

When I returned to my hotel, I immediately sent off a detailed account of the audience; and I think that document will interest my readers as much as the correspondence from London, Berlin and Frankfort. The originals are in the Dresden Archives. As I have already mentioned, my successor had copies made of them, placing them without reserve at my disposal during the short stay I made at Dresden in 1871 after my resignation. I have of course not changed a word in them.

I indulge in the hope that my impartial reader will draw three conclusions from this correspondence: first, that I gave advice to Vienna which was rejected, as on previous and later occasions, although subsequent events proved it to be good; secondly, that I zealously endeavoured to obtain for Austria the assistance of Prussia and of the Confederation, without ignoring the consideration due to Prussia; and thirdly, that that consideration was unfortunately not as scrupulously observed by Vienna as it should have been. It is true, indeed, and several passages in the correspondence prove it, that the attitude of Prussia towards the Italian War was never very friendly for Austria or the Confederation; but the surprise prepared for Prussia by the ultimatum, which was totally unexpected at Berlin after the explanations of the Archduke Albrecht and Prince Windischgrätz, was as little calculated to gain the

favour of Prussia as the language of the Viennese despatches. I beg the reader to remember what I said as to Bismarck's reports from the Bundestag. His charge of Austria's illegal oppression of the German States was unfounded; but what was true, and caused her immense damage, was the domineering tone of her despatches. The same was the case before the Italian War. She considered it Germany's evident duty—a duty the fulfilment of which did not demand her thanks—to follow her standard. On my way to London I visited King Leopold I at Laeken, and our conversation turned on this subject. 'Yes,' he said, 'it is always so: Leopold and Sobieski.'*

Of course after the war broke out, there was no further question of Lisbon.† I gave up the idea of continuing my journey to London, chiefly in consequence of an interview I had with Lord Cowley, then Ambassador in Paris, who dissuaded me from it; but when I returned to Frankfort I found there a letter from the King, instructing me to consider whether I should go to London or not after all. I talked the matter over with Count Rechberg, then Presiding Ambassador at the Bundestag, and by his advice I proceeded to London.

I have a few words to add to the details given in my reports on that visit, which will be found at the end of this chapter.

I saw Prince Albert for the last time, and found him, although opposed to the policy of the Cabinet of Vienna, far more on the side of Austria than on that

* An allusion to the ingratitude which the Emperor Leopold showed to Sobieski after the liberation of Vienna.

† See page 157.

of France. The same may be said of the Duke of Coburg, who was then in London. My audience of the Queen gave me the opportunity of making an interesting acquaintance. It was that of Marshal Pélissier, Duc de Malakoff, who had come to present his letter of recall as Ambassador, and whom I met in the anteroom at the Palace. He was a true soldier, and his ignorance of the ways of a Court was very amusing. Queen Victoria likes fresh air, a circumstance sometimes very trying to the ladies who have to appear in low dresses at the drawing-rooms held in the month of March. When Marshal Pélissier was dining one day with the Queen, next to whom he was seated, he saw the windows open, and thinking of the rheumatism he had contracted in several campaigns, he said to the attendants: 'Fermez les fenêtres!' The Queen laughed, and repeated the order in English. Even later on, when I was Ambassador in London, similar stories were current of his independent ways. The Queen excused the roughness of the old soldier, and I saw tears in his eyes when he came out from his farewell audience. Of course our conversation turned on the war that had broken out. He said: 'Voyez-vous, je n'aime pas la domination Tudesque,'—to which I replied, 'Comme nous n'aimons pas la domination Gauloise.'

Lord Derby, father of the present Earl, was then First Lord of the Treasury; and Lord Malmesbury was Foreign Secretary. I found both very reluctant to make any decided statement of policy, and Lord Derby called the fatal ultimatum a 'criminal enterprise.' One day, after dining with the Queen, Lord

Malmesbury agreeably surprised me by saying that the time had come for a corps of observation to be posted on the Rhine. I thanked him for his remark, which I at once took down and lost no time in communicating to the Prussian Ambassador. Count Bernstorff was an old friend of mine—I afterwards became his colleague in London—and he was entirely on the side of Austria, and hostile to Italy. Thus my communication to him was very natural, and it was certainly not his intention that his report of it to Berlin should result in orders being sent to Sir Alexander Malet, the English envoy, on my arrival at Frankfort, to give a denial to Lord Malmesbury's words in case they should be reported. The Prussian Ambassador in Paris, Pourtalès, to whom I had said nothing about my interview with the Emperor Napoleon, was also instructed to explain away what I had said.

This reminds me of an amusing incident. When I was Secretary of Legation in Paris, there were several old Ambassadors in the French Capital who had been there during the Consulate, the Empire, the Restoration, and the July monarchy. One of them, the Ambassador of the German Free Towns, had managed to retain his post, in spite of his age and deafness, until the second Republic and the second Empire. I saw him in 1859. I spoke to him of my interview with the Emperor, and urged upon him, in the most eloquent terms I could use, the advisability of the German envoys in Paris speaking out firmly and fearlessly. He listened attentively and seemed to understand; but when I had concluded, he

said: 'The Emperor will not hurt us, if we keep quiet.'

LETTERS to the Saxon Minister, HERR VON KÖNNERITZ, at Vienna.

(TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN)

DRESDEN, 8*th April* 1859.

Private

* * * * * * *

I cannot conceal from you that my task in Berlin has not been made easier by the recent explanations and letters of the Cabinet of Vienna, and I think their utility in the interest of Austria very doubtful. I had not expected that the idea of the Congress would be immediately entertained, and from the first I was prepared for very precise reservations. But I ask whether it was advisable at once so categorically to demand the disarmament of Sardinia, however justifiable such a demand may be from the point of view of law and convenience? I ask above all: what is the material injury done by the actual state of Sardinia? what could be the material advantage of her disarming? According to trustworthy intelligence everything is ready at Turin, and Cavour is already applying to Paris for money; why, therefore, not let the bankruptcy become complete? If the Sardinians are forced to attack, nothing could be more agreeable to Austria. And if Sardinia disarms, can Austria save a florin on her preparations? No. There is only one explanation of this demand:— Austria wishes to avoid a Congress. That is intelligible, but Austria is playing a dangerous game. Public opinion in Germany, even if it should bear the test, is worth a good deal, but not everything, and I think Austria should do her utmost to avoid

beginning the war in a state of isolation. Our new English Ambassador, Paget, a man of very moderate and correct judgment, said to me yesterday: 'Si l'Autriche insiste, elle est perdue.' That is a very strong expression, but even if large deductions are made from it, a great deal still remains. One thing must be taken into consideration. What is to be done with the Sardinian gang? After the Congress, the Lombards, Neapolitans, etc., can either be amnestied or punished, or shipped off safely to America. But *now?* And to keep the Sardinian gang within bounds regular troops are necessary, But if it be urged that Austria cannot trust the Congress or the Powers who will be represented in it unless they begin by disarming Sardinia, it may, from a purely practical point of view, be objected that if a footing of peace is restored, there will be no further work for the Congress to do. Compare the Dresden Conferences.

It appears to me that the Austrian demand would have far more effect if Austria were to declare that her attitude at the Congress would depend on the fulfilment of her legitimate wishes. Thus she would assert her position without placing the other Powers in the dilemma which annoys them so much.

Prince Metternich showed me yesterday a despatch to Herr von Koller at Berlin; it is very well written, but will cause great anger to the Prussian Cabinet; his witticism about 'ill-humour' will be strongly resented, and I fear the same will be the result of his lesson on political decorum.

Pray communicate these my private views to Count von Buol as soon as possible, that he may not believe that I acquired them in Berlin.

(Signed) Beust.

Private

DRESDEN, 11*th April* 1859.

I returned late last night from Berlin, where I went through a great deal in a short time. I write only a few lines in haste to say that I came away very satisfied.

Since nine o'clock I have been for two hours with the Prince of Hohenzollern, then at twelve with Schleinitz, and at two I was received by the Regent. When I entered the audience chamber, the two others came out.

The Prince's expressions were very gratifying. I will not ascribe any merit to myself, but I must say that I have at least not done any harm. You may assure them at Vienna that the disposition is now favourable, but it would be advisable to spare the feelings of Europe in their despatches. I have tried to bring the feeling at Berlin into harmony with the position of the Bund, laying full stress on the fact that all the German Governments, including the Bavarian, recognise their policy, duty and existence in the Bund alone; and that therefore, without being untrue to themselves, they cannot do otherwise than insist upon a definite attitude of the Bund in crises of this kind; that, therefore, there was no question of domineering over Prussia by a majority, but only a desire to maintain the Bund, Prussia having only to take the initiative in order to avoid every appearance of the pressure of 'formalism'—as people now say at Berlin.

The previous disarmament of Piedmont is considered impossible, but Prussia is very much in favour of the universal disarmament which was recently again proposed by Austria.

After my conversation, Budberg received the

intelligence that Russia had proposed a Congress *à quatre.*

England is ostensibly much displeased with Austria, but a favourable impression has been produced towards her in the English Cabinet by the discovery of Russia's great activity. Yours truly

(Signed) BEUST.

LETTER from BARON BEUST describing his interview with the EMPEROR NAPOLEON III before the ITALIAN WAR.

SAMEDI, le 23 *Avril* 1849,
à 3h

Je sors à l'instant de l'audience de l'Empereur, qui a duré juste une heure. M'étant rendu aux Tuileries en uniforme, je fus reçu par l'Empereur dans Son cabinet de travail. Il se trouvait assis en redingote à Son bureau, et commença par me faire des excuses de ne pas avoir mis d'uniforme, croyant qu'il s'agissait d'une visite sans cérémonie.

Sa Majesté me dit ensuite : 'Au reste vous venez en ennemi — pas personellement je l'espère.' — L'Empereur m'ayant fait asseoir, engagea aussitôt la conversation en abordant la question du jour ; et après avoir manifesté un vif regret de la tournure qu'avaient pris les affaires pendant les derniers jours, Il se mit à me parler de l'Allemagne, et me lança, tout en conservant un ton d'exquise politesse dont du reste Il ne s'est pas départi un seul instant pendant toute la conversation, la phrase que voici : 'Il me semble, permettez-moi de vous le dire, que les gouvernements Allemands de second ordre se prêtent dans tout ceci à un rôle de dupe. J'ai été à même de prendre connaissance de plusieurs pièces assez curieuses émanant de personnes qui se trouvent en rapports intimes avec les rédacteurs de la *Gazette d'Augsbourg* et d'autres

journaux Allemands; il y était dit en toutes lettres qu'on ne poussait à ce mouvement que dans l'espoir et même la certitude d'en finir cette fois avec les Souverainetés Allemandes.'—'Puisque Votre Majesté' — répondis-je à mon tour — 'm'a si nettement dit Sa pensée, je ne crains pas de Lui parler avec une entière franchise, et je crois même remplir un devoir envers Elle en y mettant le moins de réserve possible.' Sur un signe affirmatif de l'Empereur, je Lui donnai les explications suivantes: 'Nous ne nous faisons aucune illusion sur les mauvais éléments qui entrent dans le mouvement général des esprits en Allemagne, et il ne faut pas s'étonner que dans cette crise ils jouent leur rôle comme ils le font chaque fois qu'il y a chance d'exercer une pression quelconque sur les gouvernements. Mais ce serait tomber dans une grave erreur que de chercher dans ces éléments l'origine et la principale explication du courant actuel de l'opinion publique en Allemagne. Je Vous donne une grande preuve de sincérité en commençant par dire que l'Autriche en général n'a pas en Allemagne des sympathies bien vives. Elles sont très-prononcées dans les populations catholiques du midi, mais dans le reste de l'Allemagne, et surtout dans la population protestante, les tendances politiques et religieuses se trouvent plutôt aux prises avec le gouvernement Autrichien. Il n'en est que plus digne de remarque que dans cette question Italienne l'Allemagne a vu disparaître pour la première fois depuis longtemps toute scission et division de partis devant la conscience d'une solidarité d'intérêt entre l'Allemagne et l'Autriche. Cette conviction a jeté de si profondes racines que même la question du Concordat, qui était cependant faite pour opérer une puissante diversion, s'est trouvée complétement

étouffée. Il est vrai de dire que cette solidarité d'intérêt ne date pas d'hier. Elle a été solennellement reconnue par les gouvernements en 1840 et au début de la guerre d'Orient. Mais ce qui alors ne se faisait jour que dans le cercle rétréci des régions officielles, a été compris cette fois-ci par les populations. En Allemagne on ne rêve pas des conquêtes, mais on tient à conserver ce qu'on a. Or il ne s'agit pas de donner la Lombardie à l'Autriche, mais de se rendre compte de l'importance que l'état de possession de l'Autriche en Italie a pour l'Allemagne au point de vue militaire, politique et commercial. Et ceci on l'a complétement compris. Malgré cela il y aurait lieu de s'étonner de l'extrême passion que les Allemands, ordinairement si calmes, apportent dans cette appréciation, et puisque j'ai promis a Votre Majesté une entière franchise, je Lui en donnerai encore l'explication. Eh bien, Sire, ne cherchez la cause de cet entrain passionné que dans l'antipathie dont Votre gouvernement est l'objet depuis que cette question Italienne a surgi a l'horizon ; il Vous arrive ce qui est arrivé à l'Empereur Nicolas : on Vous considère et on Vous juge comme ayant troublé la sécurité publique. Ce sentiment était très-vif en Allemagne alors qu'il ne s'agissait que d'une attaque contre l'Empire Ottoman. Jugez ce que cela doit être lorsqu'il s'agit d'une menace dirigée contre un état de la confédération ; à côté des esprits turbulents il y a la grande masse qui ne règle ses pensées politiques que sur les intérêts qui la touchent. Tous ces gens-là se disent avec raison qu'une question Italienne tant qu'elle se traiterait entre l'Autriche et les états de la Péninsule ne pourrait jamais être de nature à compromettre le repos de l'Europe. Ils se disent encore avec raison que c'est l'intérêt que la France y met de son côté et

l'appui qu'elle prêta à un gouvernement Italien qui s'est identifié avec la révolution qui est cause de la perturbation générale. Dès ce moment, Sire, tous les partis ont dû se tourner contre le gouvernement impérial. Le parti conservateur, qui l'avait accepté avec reconnaissance lorsque Vous aviez terrassé la révolution, se trouve forcément sur le même plan que le parti démocratique, qui ne Vous l'a jamais pardonné. Tout ceci doit prouver à Votre Majesté que ceux qui Lui paraissent des agitateurs, peuvent bien être des organes passionnés et excentriques du mouvement actuel, mais qu'ils n'en sont nullement les auteurs.'

L'Empereur paraissait écouter ces explications avec un calme parfait et, je puis le dire, y prêter une attention soutenue. Il n'entreprit nullement de les refuter, et arriva par une brusque transition à l'article de l'acte final du congrès de Vienne, qui désintéresse les États de la confédération dans les guerres qu'entreprendraient pour leur compte les deux grandes puissances Allemandes. Cette observation me fournit matière à exposer à l'Empereur le vrai caractère de la confédération, qui était en effet nullement agressif et purement défensif, mais qui avait été toujours et surtout pendant la guerre d'Orient compris et appliqué par les gouvernements dans la conception la plus large. Je fis remarquer que pendant la guerre d'Orient la confédération s'était arrêtée dans l'appui prêté a l'Autriche du moment qu'il s'était agi de prendre part à une agression.

Cette fois-ci il n'y avait aucun doute—au contraire —aussi bien pour les cabinets que pour les peuples Allemands, qu'il n'était pas question pour l'Autriche de se lancer dans une guerre d'agression qu'elle avait à soutenir, mais une guerre de défense.

'Vous connaissez les Allemands, Sire ; ils sont lent

à se fixer, mais une fois qu'ils se sont arrêtés à une idée ils ne l'abandonnent pas facilement ; et aujourd'hui une apparence même d'agression de la part de l'Autriche ne changera rien à leur jugement.'

L'Empereur me dit alors : 'Mais on fera une chose très-simple, on s'engagera à respecter les frontières de la confédération.'—' Permettez, Sire, de Vous répondre que la confédération ne pourrait jamais accepter un engagement que je dois supposer lui être offert à des conditions onéreuses. Si les frontières étaient attaquées elle devrait les défendre, et il est impossible que la France puisse calculer d'avance jusqu'où la guerre doit s'étendre et jusqu'où elle ne doit pas.'—' Ainsi, Vous croyez une neutralité impossible ? '—' Je le crois et le dis très sincèrement. Nous ne désirons nullement la guerre, nous la croyons désastreuse pour tout le monde, et les gouvernements sauront apporter toute la modération possible dans leurs actes. Ce qui se fait aujourd'hui à la Diète n'a rien de provoquant ; les mesures qu'on y prend sont prévues par les lois fondamentales, mais si la guerre éclate et qu'elle s'engage entre la France et l'Autriche, il paraît impossible que l'Allemagne n'y soit enveloppée. Je suis le dernier à suivre aveuglement le courant de l'opinion publique ; j'ai montré à ce sujet assez d'indépendance, mais nous devons compter avec le mouvement national ; et lorsque ce mouvement, bien contrairement aux tendances subversives qu'il a montré jusqu'ici, ne demande que le soutien du premier État de la confédération contre les dangers dont il est menacé, il y aurait folie à vouloir l'étouffer.' — L'Empereur passa alors à la question Italienne elle-même, en répétant plus ou moins les arguments de la brochure Laguerronière sur la nécessité de régler les

affaires de l'Italie. Il est inutile de rapporter cette partie de notre entretien, où de part et d'autre il n'y avait qu'un échange de redites. Je ne saurais toutefois passer sous silence que l'Empereur déguisait assez mal la pensée secrète de mettre fin à la domination Autrichienne en Italie, qui ne pourrait être soutenue qu'avec 100,000 hommes en temps de paix, et constituait un état de choses insoutenable. Revenant alors à la charge, l'Empereur me dit : ' Il n'y a donc aucun moyen d'amadouer l'Allemagne ? ' — ' Franchement, Sire, je n'en vois pas d'autre que de la désintéresser de la guerre qui est sur le point de s'enflammer. ' — ' Mais savez-vous que l'attitude de l'Allemagne commence à devenir inquiétante pour l'Europe, on ne peut plus faire un pas ni s'intéresser à une question quelconque sans la trouver sur son chemin. D'un côté vous menacez le Danemarc, et de l'autre l'Autriche étend ses bras jusqu'à Naples ; et là encore vous êtes avec elle.' — ' Permettez, Sire, ' dis-je en souriant, ' que je n'accepte pas cette position brillante que Vous faites à l'Allemagne. Le Holstein est un pays Allemand, et la Diète doit écouter ses plaintes comme celles de tous les autres pays Allemands. Elle y a mis une modération que je ne désapprouve pas, mais qu'une grande partie de l'Allemagne lui reproche. Quant à Naples je peux Vous dire ceci : si l'Autriche avait pesé de tout le poids de ses influences Italiennes sur ce pays-là, elle aurait peut-être bien fait, mais je vous certifie qu'en Allemagne personne n'y aurait vu un motif pour la confédération de s'y associer.' Je dois ajouter que le long préambule dont l'Empereur faisait précéder cette dernière sortie ne permettait pas de supposer de Sa part une simple plaisanterie. L'Empereur me parla encore beaucoup des questions d'actualité. Il m'apprit le

fait assez curieux qu'à l'heure qu'il est la sommation n'était pas encore arrivée à Turin. Je fus frappé de l'extrême modération que l'Empereur apporta dans Son jugement sur la conduite de l'Autriche dans cette dernière circonstance, et l'air presque indifférent dont Il parlait des protestations qu'elle avait provoquées. Sa Majesté s'attacha seulement à relever les embarras que l'Autriche venait de créer au ministère Britannique, qui était resté dans l'ignorance la plus parfaite de ce qu'on avait médité à Vienne. Je me permis d'exprimer sous ce dernier rapport des doutes que j'avais lieu de croire très-fondés, car il me paraît au moins très-certain qu'à la suite de la mission de Lord Cowley le ministère Anglais devait connaître assez la position avancée du gouvernement Autrichien pour mesurer l'étendue des moyens qui étaient nécessaires pour empêcher une résolution précipitée, et que l'Empereur fût assez juste pour reconnaître sans que j'y eusse fait allusion, que les discours des ministres Anglais avaient été faits pour encourager l'Autriche à entrer dans la voie où elle venait de s'engager. En général, je dois relever comme un fait curieux que, somme toute, l'Empereur eut presque plus de blâme pour les oscillations de l'Angleterre, que pour les actes du gouvernement Autrichien pendant cette dernière phase.

L'Empereur, avant de me congédier, s'informa avec beaucoup d'intérêt de la santé du Roi, et m'exprima de nouveau toute la part qu'il avait prise à la douloureuse perte éprouvée par la famille Royale. Il me serra enfin cordialement la main en me disant qu'il espérait me revoir, et non en ennemi.

LETTERS to His Excellency the Minister of State, HERR VON FALKENSTEIN, in Dresden.

(TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN).

Private.

PARIS, 24*th April* 1859.

Your Excellency's obliging despatch of the 19th inst. was handed to me the day before yesterday in the evening, and I beg to thank you for it.

You will meanwhile have become acquainted with my report from Munich to his Majesty the King, and have received a private letter from Karlsruhe.

I had a long audience of the Emperor yesterday. It was arranged by Herr von Seebach before telegraphic orders arrived. This could not have been easily avoided, and I have every reason to believe that it will not be quite useless.

I enclose a narrative which I drew up immediately after the audience, and for every word of which I can vouch. It was so far of importance that the Council of Ministers, which was assembled in the adjoining room, had to wait half-an-hour for the Emperor, which circumstance, in the present pressure of business, proves how much he occupies himself with the affairs of Germany. It is surely well that I rejected most decidedly, both to the Emperor and to Count Walewski, the proposal of neutrality. I have done so again to the latter to-day, and laid great stress on the necessity of considering the Bund. Count Walewski tried to persuade me by saying that considerations of humanity made it desirable that the war should be as short as possible, and that this would alone be done by Germany remaining neutral. My reply was very simple. 'De deux choses l'une: ou vous avez des revers—alors vous ne voudrez

pas terminer la guerre ; ou les Autrichiens en essuient —alors l'Autriche aura recours à la confédération. Ainsi, de toutes manières, l'attente de l'Allemagne n'abrégera pas la guerre.' As matters stand it is scarcely to be hoped that the war can be avoided. But England will try to prevent an engagement until the last moment, and she will redouble her efforts if the neutrality of Germany cannot be counted upon. It is that which takes me over to England for a day. I intend to be in Dresden again on Friday.

That the latest step of the Cabinet of Vienna has brought it into a false position, and has given the Emperor Napoleon a host of advocates for war, is, alas ! only too evident. It is incomprehensible how this bold decision could have been so unskilfully carried out as to give the French so much opportunity of appearing at the right moment on the scene of war. The most favourable explanation, given by Lord Cowley in his partiality to Austria, is that she wishes to end the unequal game between herself and France, and to place France under the necessity of risking similar pecuniary losses to her own.

The remaining news of the day I leave to the royal Ambassador.

(Signed) BEUST.

P. S. As I have just been informed by telegram from London that none of the Ministers are in town at present, I give up my idea of going there, and return to-morrow evening to Frankfort, where I shall make a short stay, arriving at Dresden on Thursday.

Private.

LONDON, *5th May*, 1859.

I begin by relating a few circumstances which have given my journey to London, undertaken by command of his Majesty, a longer duration than

could originally have been expected. The absence of a direct railway between Frankfort and Cologne, a violent storm which prevented the boat from leaving Calais, and a bad passage, prevented my arriving here before Sunday the 1st inst.

In the absence of the Saxon Minister here, I applied directly and by letter to Lord Malmesbury to obtain an interview with him and an audience of the Queen. I was invited to the Foreign Office the next day; but Lord Malmesbury was detained at Windsor, and not being able to keep his appointment, was obliged to postpone the rendezvous until Tuesday. The Prince Consort happened to be away from Windsor, and returned only on Tuesday evening. Yesterday, Wednesday, the Court came to town, and the Prince Consort received me immediately after his arrival; and to-day her Majesty the Queen has fixed my audience for three o'clock, immediately after the Duc de Malakoff, and has honoured me with an invitation to dinner. Thus I could not at the earliest leave before to-morrow, Friday. But as the telegraphic despatch that reached me last night says that my return is no longer specially pressing, I thought it right to accept an invitation from the Prussian Ambassador for to-morrow, as I shall thereby have the opportunity of meeting several remarkable characters. I shall, therefore begin my homeward journey the day after to-morrow, Saturday, and shall first proceed to Frankfort according to orders.

The telegraphic despatch I received at Frankfort left it to my own judgment whether to undertake the journey to London or not, and I had serious doubts as to the possibility of success, especially of such a success as would compensate me for the great personal inconvenience which would be caused to me just now

by my absence from Dresden. Still, I decided on following his Majesty's suggestion, chiefly because I thought that I perceived therein his conviction of the special importance of this place, where we have at present no representative, and also because direct acquaintance with English affairs may be of great use for the further consideration of the actual political position of Germany. My task of observing and acting in the interest of our cause was indeed made much more difficult by existing circumstances: in the former respect by the elections, which are depopulating the London drawing-rooms and drawing public attention away from the questions most important to us; in the latter, by the still very unfavourable turn public opinion has taken towards Austria, and by the precarious position of the Government, which makes it avoid every appearance of abandoning the strictest neutrality. Under these circumstances I must be thankful that Lord Malmesbury granted me two protracted interviews, one with him alone, and the other with Lord Derby as a witness. This latter arrangement, which only wanted the presence of a secretary to be complete, is a further proof of the great precaution with which these questions are now treated here, although I do not deny that it also proves the interest taken by the Cabinet in my communications.

It did not require much trouble to ascertain the state of public opinion on the Italian question. The first violent outbreak of anti-Austrian feeling which Lord Derby tried to surpass by stigmatising the action of Austria with the incredible appellation of 'a crime,' has been followed by a somewhat calmer attitude, and the deep rooted distrust of France fairly holds the balance against the enthusiasm for the liberation of

Italy. But even in the most favourably disposed circles this balance of opinion results merely in a disposition to abstain from all intervention—in other words, to maintain the strictest neutrality. There can be no doubt that Austria has committed grievous errors in her late aggressive policy, and that the idea of her being a disturber of peace, which was so cleverly spread in Paris, gave the first impulse to the change of public opinion in England. But this first impression would long ago have yielded to a juster view in the dispassionate and reasonable English mind, had not the cause of displeasure had an earlier and more profound origin. I have always expressed the opinion that the Austrian Cabinet should have the patience to go through the stage of a Congress; and I was so deeply impressed by the great mistake of adopting a different view that I thought it out of the question, and therefore supposed I could safely remain absent from Dresden until the middle of May. People here have always clearly perceived, on the one hand, that France and Sardinia desire to make conquests at the expense of Austria, and on the other, that the insecure condition of the Italian States is due to that Power. In the former respect Austria finds as much sympathy here as she does antipathy in the latter. Had Austria accepted the Congress without reservation, she would have put a stop to all Franco-Sardinian schemes of spoliation; and the then remaining question of reforms in the Italian States would have presented so many difficulties, that Vienna might have run the risk of allowing the Congress to debate upon it and finally to separate without arriving at a decision, while revolution was preparing in Italy, to be followed by universal repression. Instead of this, Austria has taken on herself the responsibility of

destroying all hopes of pacific reform, and has exposed the maintenance of the existing territorial distribution to the chances of war; and it is natural that the less England is disposed to help her in the former point, the less will she be inclined to support her in the latter.

Lord Malmesbury was therefore perfectly right when he declared to me that England would observe the strictest neutrality, and that no Minister who wished to act otherwise could remain a day in office. I was quite prepared for such a declaration; and it would have been utterly useless to attempt to speak to an English Minister about the possibilities of the future, or to attempt to prove to him the utility of timely opposition to France. I had to accept the position, and to use all my efforts to prevent England from putting pressure on Berlin to oppose a more decided attitude on the part of Germany, in order that Prussia might not be opposed, or rather that she should be encouraged, in assuming with the other German Governments a firmer position towards France. I may flatter myself that my efforts with this object were not made in vain. I struck a responsive chord in urging that if the object is to make the war as short as possible, German intervention would be the best, and German neutrality the worst, means of attaining this object. My arguments were as follows:—

If Germany limits herself merely to maintaining her troops at great expense on a war footing, without assuming a definite position—a course which public opinion in Germany would not long tolerate—Austria would practically derive no support from her. Germany would neither be able to restrain France nor to exercise pressure on Austria when the time for concluding peace should arrive. In this way Germany would

play an ambiguous and not very creditable part, so long as her armaments are declared to be only for the protection of the territory of the Bund. But her attitude would be at once honourable, bold, and favourable to England's pacific views, if Prussia and the Confederation made an imposing display of troops on the Rhine. The forces of France would then be divided, and she would be disabled from continuing the war; while means would be afforded of inducing Austria to accept an honourable peace, for that Power cannot remain indifferent as to whether she will enjoy so considerable a support for long or not.

It was perhaps not quite unnecessary that I was able on this occasion to enlighten the great ignorance of the English Ministers as to the affairs of the German Confederation. It was repeatedly asked what France had done that was menacing to Germany? Whereupon I explained the 47th Article of the Agreement of Vienna, which is totally unknown here, and the action of Germany during the Crimean War, which was here considered insufficient. At that time they went so far as to hold that an attack on Austrian troops would have been an attack on Germany, though nobody dreamed of invading Austrian territory; while now the enemies of Austria openly avow their intention of despoiling her of a province. The military importance which the possession of Lombardy by Austria has for Germany seemed to be equally unknown to Lord Malmesbury.

I am satisfied with the final results of the interview, as Lord Derby and Lord Malmesbury both gave me a decided assurance that if Prussia should make up her mind to join the Confederation in an imposing military display on the Rhine, England would not dissuade or prevent her. This assurance

acquires more significance from the fact that Lord Malmesbury told me of Prussia's desire to neutralise the Baltic and the North Sea, adding that England would endeavour to act in accordance with it; and that I made him clearly understand that this plan would not in any way be affected by Prussia acting as I proposed.

An important question is: Will the present Ministry remain in office? Opinions differ greatly. No one doubts that the elections will raise the number of the supporters of the Ministry from 275 to about 300, which will just enable it to exist if the 354 members of the Opposition do not unite against it. Many people think, however, that this will be the case, being fully persuaded that when the new Parliament meets, a vote of confidence will be unavoidable, and that the fraction of the Radicals which is in favour of a war with France will not vote with the rest of the House. If a change of Ministry takes place, things will certainly be bad for us, as it is to be feared that Lord Palmerston and Lord Wodehouse will decidedly take the part of Italy; whereas Lord Clarendon, whose accession to power is, unfortunately, scarcely probable, would be far more decided in his support of Austria than Lord Malmesbury. But on the whole the principle of neutrality will predominate; and therefore it would be all the more important if Prussia and the Bund were to take up without delay the position I indicate, so that the new Ministry should find it an accomplished fact. I have not hesitated to communicate the result of my interview to Count Bernstorff, but I humbly submit that it might be well for his Majesty to mention it to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

I must here mention that his Highness the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, who received me last Monday

at Windsor, after having exhausted the usual stock of complaints of Austria and her policy, nevertheless expressed himself very much in accordance with our views. This, however, seems to have made, as I shall show further on, but little impression on his brother, the Prince Consort. The Duke told me that he would propose to Berlin that Prussia should cross the Rhine as soon as the French enter Austrian territory. Of course I did not dissuade him from this intention, and I think it excellent that such a proposal should emanate from him; but I regret that the Duke communicated his project at the same time to Lord Malmesbury, on whom I found it produced a very unfavourable effect; and I think it was very fortunate that I came at the right moment to prevent an English remonstrance at Berlin. I have succeeded in so doing by placing the whole idea more in the light of a matter under consideration than of a formulated decision. The latter would seem to me very difficult, Austria having provoked the war by occupying Sardinian territory; and a decision of the Bund could hardly be arrived at in the midst of a war during which French soldiers might appear on Austrian territory. But I made it plain that if Austria were beaten and a part of Lombardy were in the hands of the enemy, the German Confederation would have to decide the question whether it should assist Austria to regain her possessions or not; and that I did not have the slightest doubt that it would decide this question in the affirmative.

I reserve further communications, especially those concerning my interview with the Prince Consort, for a later report which I shall send off when I am on my way to Dresden.

(Signed) Beust.

Private

London, *7th May* 1859.

I hope your Excellency will receive a report which I sent off yesterday to the address of the editor Hartmann. I also hope that you have received through the agency of the Hanoverian Ministry a telegraphic despatch yesterday morning.

To complete the latter, I must mention the following particulars:—Lord Malmesbury, in whose company I dined on Thursday with the Queen, reverted of his own accord to the subject of our interviews, and ended by saying quite openly that after the Duc de Malakoff had been called away to take command of the troops at Nancy, the time had come for Germany to place a strong corps of observation on the Rhine, and that it will be well to do so at the right moment. I noted down this declaration, which so far exceeded my expectations, and I did not omit to communicate it the next morning to Count Bernstorff, at the same time requesting him to ask Lord Malmesbury to confirm it, which his Lordship did. Whether Count Bernstorff will report the declaration in an urgent despatch to Berlin, as I wished him to do, remains to be seen. He is personally inclined to share our views; but perhaps for that very reason he may be less inclined to oppose the view taken at Berlin; and, indeed, I have been informed that he was not quite pleased at my making so much progress with Lord Malmesbury in so short a time. The Count's great devotion to his duty, however, is a guarantee that he will not omit to forward Lord Malmesbury's declaration. I have since had an opportunity of repeating to Mr Disraeli the explanations detailed in my last report, and they found in him a very favourable listener, which I cannot say of Lord Palmerston.

This is, indeed, not surprising, as Lord Clarendon assured me through a third person that he quite agreed with my views. As I have already mentioned, a great deal depends on the new Ministry finding Germany in a more decided attitude, and there can be no surer means of cooling the ardour of England's sympathies for Italy than to shift the scene of war, and substitute for the Italian question a Franco-German one. This will be the only way to accustom the English public to the thought of the possibility of a war with France.

As I have already stated, I had the honour of being received at a special audience by her Majesty, and of being subsequently invited to dinner. I also thought it well to appear at to-day's Drawing Room. I had a most gracious reception by the Queen.

The Ministers seem more sanguine to-day as to their position, but there is much doubt everywhere else on the subject.

(Signed) Beust.

Private

Frankfort-on-the-Main, 10*th May* 1859.

As I telegraphed to your Excellency, I left London on Saturday evening, after having attended the Drawing Room. The little annoyances that have harassed me throughout this journey repeated themselves on my way home. A stupid conductor at Ghent showed me into the slow train instead of the express, and I consequently arrived so late at Cologne that it was only with the greatest difficulty that I reached Frankfort yesterday afternoon. Yesterday evening I had detailed conferences with Count Rechberg and Baron von der Pfordten. They showed so great a divergence of opinion as regards the principal points of discussion that I am obliged

to continue the conference to-day. I do not give up the hope of arriving at a complete understanding. Herr von der Pfordten has received instructions, as your Excellency may be aware, to move in the Confederate Assembly that the 47th Article of the Vienna Agreement should be reconsidered. This preliminary step is certainly excellent, if it is made with the decided intention of coming to a decision which would give the war armaments of the Bund a clearly-defined object. The statements of Herr von der Pfordten to Count Rechberg and myself were not satisfactory, as they conveyed the belief that Prussia would act at the right moment, and that all that was wanted was to give her a slight stimulus to take the initiative. I have every reason to think that Herr von der Pfordten does not express his personal opinion in making these statements, and that he has received orders to make them from his superiors. Our conference of to-day, will, I hope, make this clear.

For my part I cannot deny that all the occurrences of the last month have filled me with the greatest distrust of the ideas prevalent at Berlin. I refer not only to the manifestations which followed the Austrian summons, but especially to the attitude of the Prussian Minister in London towards his German colleagues, from which it was obvious how unwelcome to Berlin were the assurances given me by Lord Malmesbury. I have even cause to fear, in consequence of an interview I had with Count Bernstorff shortly before my departure, that in response to my suggestion that pressure should be exercised at Berlin in a sense favourable to Austria, the Prussian Cabinet has been working in London in an opposite sense with regard to the other German Governments.

Everything must assuredly be done to facilitate Prussia's co-operation with the other States; but any considerable prolongation of the present state of things seems to me in the highest degree dangerous. Events on the battlefield may rapidly assume a most disastrous form for Austria; and, taking the most favourable view, if Prussia were then to come quickly to her assistance, she would make Austria her debtor and us her powerless tools, and the debt might have to be paid at our expense later on. Should, on the contrary, Prussia be able to pursue her present course so far as to bring about a peace disadvantageous for Austria, Prussia would have to make demands in Paris and St Petersburg, and perhaps also in London, that would at last have to be satisfied also at the expense of the German Governments. If, on the other hand, the German Governments, by united and energetic action, could either force Prussia to act, or, in the worst case, make a display of forces on the Rhine with Austria alone, they would certainly risk much; but if successful, they have much to gain. They would have led Germany into the war; public opinion would support them; and, if it came to the worst, they would fall on the field of honour. I am therefore of opinion that the Bavarian proposal is a good one; it would prepare for the measures that must be taken, and would give the various States sufficient time to complete the military preparations that must precede the occupation of the Rhine by a Confederate Army. When that moment arrives, all parties must demand of Prussia that she should propose at Frankfort that such measures should be taken as the circumstances may require—for something more could then be considered than merely posting a corps of observation—and if Prussia refuses to comply with this demand,

the majority would have to make its decision at once under the 47th Article, and telegraphic orders would have to be issued for the Confederate troops to be set in motion. If I can come to a preliminary agreement in this sense, subject to his Majesty's approval, I will try to complete it in Hanover. An interview with Count Platen would be especially important, as unity of action towards Prussia is now above all of the highest moment, and it appears therefore to be absolutely necessary to concede to Bavaria at least a formal leadership, which, as a rule, Hanover would not be likely to agree to. I leave this early to-morrow morning, arriving at Hanover in the evening. Probably a royal invitation to dinner will detain me all the following day at Hanover; but I intend to travel all night, so that I may arrive on Friday morning at nine o'clock at Dresden.

In completion of my London reports, I have to mention an interview with the Prince Consort, the report of which I could not entrust to the Prussian post. This interview gave me a deep insight into the Prince's thoughts, and an insight which gives rise to sad meditations. He went so far as to say that he was convinced that it would be a real blessing for Germany if Austria were to become so weakened as to be no longer a support to the minor German States, and if a new organization of Germany could expel her altogether; that he considered the possession of Lombardy a trouble and a burthen, and not at all an advantage. I think it will be superfluous to mention further details of our conversation, or to touch on the question of the nature of the Prince's influence on the English Ministry, or, what is still more pernicious, on Berlin. I wish I could believe that the rumours mentioned in the papers of

Orleanistic influences at the Court of St James's, and of King Leopold's intrigues, might have induced the Prince to express himself towards me in an anti-Austrian sense; but his expressions were so violent as to betray a deeply-rooted hatred of Austria, far surpassing his great and unconcealed aversion to the Emperor Napoleon. Nor did the Prince conceal from me that his silent, but always restless, ambition prompts him to use all his efforts to promote the plan of making the King of Prussia Emperor of Germany, which he was the first to reveal to me early in 1848, before the February Revolution. Far from rejoicing at the patriotic conduct of the German Governments, and the excellent national spirit of their subjects, he harped on the imperfections of the Federal Constitution, and depreciated everything that is now being done, constantly laying stress on the fact that Germany has no sovereign to represent her abroad and take the command of her armies. I did not shirk the labour of enlightening the Prince on the present state of Germany, which has changed so completely in the last eleven years; but I had no prospect of success. Nevertheless, his Royal Highness seemed rather taken aback by what I said about public opinion in Southern Germany and in Saxony, and about the possibility of the remainder of Germany acting against Prussia in the present crisis.

If, as Herr von Usedom's statements here lead one to infer, Berlin intends to wait and see whether the present English Ministry will remain in office or not, this is either a complete misconception of the situation, or a calculation to avoid assisting Austria. If a Liberal Ministry comes in and finds Germany in her present condition, its first step will be a decided protest against any action; but if it finds the army of

observation already posted on the Rhine, it will accept it as a 'fait accompli.' Public opinion will always be the basis of English policy, and it can only be gained for Germany's support of Austria if Germany, wholly or in part, advances with the force of a national movement, thereby depriving the war of the character of a struggle for the liberation of Italy, and giving it that of self-defence against the domination of Napoleon. This is the ground on which England is to be won, and the sooner Germany enters on it, the sooner must England cease her hesitation.

When I went yesterday to Count Rechberg, I was very much surprised to hear from him that, in opposition to the assurances given me by Lord Malmesbury, the English Minister, Sir Alexander Malet, had read him a despatch according to which the English Cabinet denies that the German Confederation has any right to interfere in the Italian War, and declines in advance any protection of German commerce should Germany take any aggressive steps in the matter. In consequence of that communication I proceeded this morning to Sir Alexander Malet's, and had the satisfaction of hearing from him that the despatch in question was sent off on the 2nd of May, before my first interview with Lord Malmesbury. Sir Alexander, who is very well inclined towards us, was highly delighted with the results of my London mission, and accepted them without reserve.

(Signed) BEUST.

Private

FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN, 10*th May* 1859.

9 P.M.

My conjecture as to the real origin of the views expressed yesterday by Herr von der Pfordten was completely confirmed to-day by his frank statements

to me on the subject. He at the same time gave me clearly to understand how agreeable it would be to him if I were to enable him to report that Saxony was in favour of a more energetic policy. I accordingly pointed out to him the course which I would recommend to his Majesty the King, and he finally declared himself ready to advocate it at Munich.

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I should here mention that Sir Alexander Malet said to me in the strictest confidence that Herr von Usedom had told him and Count Fénélon that Prussia was only arming to keep the other German States in check. He further informed me that Baron Schleinitz had told Lord Bloomfield that she intended to occupy Saxony and Hanover. It is possible that this was merely said in order to inspire fear, but it clearly proves the spirit animating the Berlin Cabinet.

The bearer of my two reports of to-day will remain long enough in Dresden to be able to take after my return the decision of his Majesty the King to the Royal Minister to the Bundestag.

(Signed) Beust.

Letter to the Saxon Minister, Herr von Könneritz, at Vienna.

Private

Dresden, 15*th May* 1859.

I avail myself of the journey of Prince Metternich to Vienna to send your Excellency copies of four reports relating to my mission to London, which I sent, some from that city, some from Frankfort. They are merely intended for your information, and I beg of you not to reveal any part of their contents.

I also forwarded a detailed account of my interview (which lasted an hour) with the Emperor Napoleon, but I do not send a copy of it, in order to be able to say with truth that it has not been communicated. Count Rechberg and Prince Metternich know all these reports.

The sincerity of my declarations in Paris has had the good effect of producing manifestations in Berlin which have warned the other German Governments, with redoubled emphasis, that they must follow an independent and united course of action.

In England, where unfortunately the Ministry is in a very shaky condition, the language hitherto officially used will not be abandoned; but, as I have reason to hope, in consequence of my interviews with Lord Malmesbury, the British representatives will be instructed to express themselves less sharply against the proceedings of Germany.

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His Majesty received the day before yesterday the Aide de Camp of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, General von Alvensleben, and replied to his representations against the proceedings in the Bund that if General Willisen should succeed in making an agreement, his Majesty would be greatly pleased, and certainly would not interfere with it, but that he would support Austria should she demand further assistance from the Bund. According to the most recent information from Berlin, Herr von Schleinitz, who is regarded as the principal representative of neutrality, in contradistinction to the Regent, has assumed a less rigid attitude.

(Signed) BEUST.

CHAPTER XVII

1859

CONTINUATION OF THE ITALIAN WAR.—THE SAXON CHAMBERS.—PRINCE GORTSCHAKOFF.—VISIT TO VIENNA.—THE WÜRZBURG CONFERENCE

Soon after my return, the Saxon Chambers assembled in an extraordinary session. It would be almost impossible now to form a conception of the friendliness to Austria which was then expressed in the newspapers and at public meetings. It not only showed itself in the First Chamber, which was natural enough, but also in the Second Chamber; and I cannot forget how its President commented in the strongest terms on the 'civilizing mission' of the Emperor Napoleon. My own speech was considered almost too cold. I have never been able to obtain a sufficient explanation of why Austria did not apply at once to the Bund when French troops had entered her territory, especially as in those days there was so much talk at Vienna of posting forces on the Rhine.

One of the reasons given is that Prussia had to be considered. But, as I have shown elsewhere, it would have been better not to have neglected that consideration before the war began. The Austrian Cabinet was not perhaps sufficiently aware of the feeling at Berlin, but it could not have been so ill informed as to imagine that Prussia would immediately take the initiative. If she had applied to the Bund, the majority of the Federal States would undoubtedly have voted in favour of assisting her, and I do not think that under the then existing circumstances, anybody would have deemed it possible that Prussia should actively interfere. Yet we are told that those were the days of the 'miserable Bundestag,' 'the deplorable system of the Minor States,' which the Vienna papers were constantly making the subject of their ridicule.

The events of the war and the conclusion of peace lie beyond the range of these volumes; but I cannot help alluding here to a despatch in which I sent a rejoinder to a note from Prince Gortschakoff, making some dictatorial remarks to the German Governments on the nature of the German Confederation, and alleging that it was the duty of the Confederate States to observe a passive attitude. From many quarters I received cordial thanks for my despatch, but not from Vienna.

That I did not take this much to heart, is proved by my visit to Vienna in September. To this very day I vividly remember what a painful feeling overcame me when I heard from my room in the hotel 'Erzherzog Karl' a regimental band playing the Radetzky March, which reminded me of happier days.

I held frequent conferences with Count Rechberg, who had meanwhile become the head of the Ministry, and endeavoured to convince him that a close agreement of the Central States would be far more useful to Austria than isolated intercourse with the various Courts and Governments. Unfortunately Vienna was never inclined to take this view for long ; and the independent voice of Hanover, untrammelled by the decisions of conferences, had more weight than the united action of the other Central States. This resulted finally in events which were neither agreeable to Austria nor to Hanover.

On the whole, however, the attitude of the Imperial Cabinet may be said to have been favourable to the conference of the Central States that met shortly afterwards at Würzburg for the consideration of various questions, some of which were still pending at the Federal Assembly, and others about to be introduced there.

CHAPTER XVIII

1860–1861

THE 'NATIONALVEREIN.'—MY PROJECT OF REFORM OF THE CONFEDERATION.—ITALY AGAIN.

The year 1860 reminds me of the 'Nationalverein.' In treating of this subject I do not feel altogether sure, and I look for a judgment that may be more impartial. In the tenth volume of Brockhaus 'Encyclopædia,' published in 1867, I find on page 610 the following paragraph :—

"'Nationalverein" (German). The patriotic movement in Germany during the Italian War in 1859 gave occasion for the foundation of this patriotic association, which, after various preliminary conferences at Eisenach and Hanover, formally constituted itself at a meeting at Frankfort-on-the-Main on the 15th and 16th of September.'

To say nothing of its acknowledged merit, the Brockhaus 'Encyclopædia' has never had the evil

reputation of being reactionary, particularist, and anti-Prussian. And yet no more bitter satire could have been written on the Nationalverein than the above paragraph. The patriotic movement in Germany during the Italian War (or rather after that war, for it was very short, and there was no such movement during the war), was spontaneous and enthusiastic, as I have said in former chapters, and as cannot be doubted without ignoring every expression of public opinion in the year 1859; and its object was intervention in favour of Austria and opposition to French aggression. But the result of the movement was that no one came to the assistance of Austria, and that Germany remained an inactive spectator whilst her 'hereditary enemy' was depriving Austria of one of her fairest provinces. Now it was to be expected that the movement would at least give Austria time, if not active assistance, to strengthen her shattered power, as she was part of Germany. But this would have been a great mistake. The very first step taken by this patriotic association, was to revive the plan of excluding Austria from Germany, which had necessarily been abandoned since 1850. Just as the National movement before March 1848 had acquired its full strength after Louis Philippe had lost his head during a riot, the movement of 1859 first arose after Austria had lost several battles in Italy. It was Austria's misfortunes that gave rise to those meetings and preliminary consultations whose object was her exclusion from Germany, and which were held after, and not during, the Italian War.

It was natural that the German Governments

should have assumed a cold and repellent attitude towards this movement. In the first years of the Bismarck régime this could be said even of Prussia, and I myself do not deny that I was strongly opposed to it. But I do not remember ever having, in connection with it, punished or reprimanded the officials under my orders; indeed, I do not believe that any of them would have joined the movement.

Soon after the foundation of the Nationalverein, I proposed a scheme for the reform of the Confederation which was directly in opposition to the Verein's aspirations, though my opposition was in no way prompted by rivalry or hostility. I had indeed to thank the Nationalverein for the fact that the Landtag which met at the end of 1860 began for the first time to remind one of the Parliamentary purgatory of 1849, though fortunately without permanent effects. At this Landtag a peasant Deputy introduced a motion calling upon the Government to take steps for the revival of a German Central Power with popular representation. The Chamber was not yet prepared for such a proposal, and four months passed before the Committee appointed to consider the motion presented its report. This gave me the opportunity, a rare one in those days, of enlivening the debates with a joke. I propounded the riddle: 'If a motion to establish a German Central Power takes four months before it is discussed in the Chamber, how long will it take to establish that Central Power?' As events proved, it took exactly ten years, but in those days that period would have been considered too short. After promising attention

to the motion, with certain reservations, I set to work immediately at the close of the Landtag in 1861, and first submitted my draft at Vienna, where I was staying for a few days on my way to Gastein.

As the draft was made at a time when there was no pressure, either internal or external, on the Governments, it was conceived in a spirit of moderate and prudent reform. On the other hand, the character of a Confederation of States had to be maintained, as the establishment of a predominance of 'Confederate State' would, in the view of its projectors, involve the exclusion of Austria. The practical result which I had in my mind was to make the machinery of the Confederation work more rapidly, and to introduce a mode of procedure more calculated to rouse public interest than the Assembly which sat during the whole year in the Eschenheimer Gasse at Frankfort, and was regarded by the nation with complete indifference. I accordingly proposed to leave at Frankfort only the members of the Federal Administration, and to fix biennial meetings of the Bundestag, each for a period of one month, on the 1st of May in a Southern town (Ratisbon), and on the 1st of November in a Northern town (Hamburg), with the proviso that a representative Assembly of delegates from the German Parliaments might be convoked from time to time, Austria presiding when the Assembly met at Ratisbon, and Prussia when it met at Hamburg. My hope that this scheme would have the effect of bringing the Confederation more into touch with public opinion cannot be regarded as too sanguine. The Representative Assembly would soon have become

permanent, developing its powers and the number of its members. With full right could I thus reply, in a despatch addressed to the Saxon envoy, Baron von Könneritz, to the objections made to my plan by the Cabinet of Vienna: 'Our proposal of holding periodical Bundestags may appear unpractical, but we doubt whether Vienna would answer in the negative if we asked whether, after the beginning of the Italian War in 1859, the same lamentable result of the conferences of the Military Committee of the Confederation at Frankfort could have been possible if the Bundestag had met on the 1st of May 1859 at Ratisbon, together with the representative Assembly which we propose. Those who remember the state of affairs and of public opinion in those days would not hesitate to say that such a Bundestag could not possibly have separated without passing a resolution for the active intervention of the Confederation. In such a Bundestag, Prussia could not have avoided the question at issue, while in the Committee discussions and negotiations were protracted until the favourable moment had gone, and the favourable tendency had disappeared.'

I unfortunately found at Vienna, I cannot say no appreciation, but no decision. As I said above, I first presented my draft to the Austrian Government. The Emperor, by whom I had the honour of being received in an audience, expressed himself favourably towards it, and approved of the proposal of Austria and Prussia presiding in turn over the Confederation. Count Rechberg was more reserved, though he did not give an adverse opinion. But as ill-luck would

have it, the Ministerialrath Baron Biegeleben, reporter on German affairs, was ill at the time, and the Foreign Office had to wait for his opinion until he recovered. It was decidedly hostile. He expressed his view in several despatches with characteristic incisiveness; but I think I could easily have refuted him by word of mouth. Strong opposition, nay, almost indignation, was raised by the idea of an alternate Presidency. 'Could one imagine,' it was asked, 'the United States of America with two Presidents?' This was the mistake, which I have pointed out elsewhere, of confusing the Presidency of the Federal Assembly with that of the Confederation, and of comparing Washington with Buol-Schauenstein, or Lincoln with Kübeck. But the sharing with another—not the resignation—of a purely honorary right was regarded as an impossible sacrifice. Here again we see appearances preferred to reality.

Considering how large even at that time the party still was which desired nothing more than parity with Austria and the cessation of the supposed, though not actual, encroachments of that Power, it cannot be denied that by making the slight sacrifice I proposed, Austria would have lost little and gained much.

I am far from maintaining that the assent of the Prussian Cabinet was to be reckoned upon, but Austria's refusal made it easier for Prussia to do the same. Count Bernstorff's reply, while abounding in compliments on the 'latest work of the eminent statesman whose action in German questions always received the attention of the Berlin Government,'

and on 'the ingenious scheme, framed with a thorough appreciation of the various and deviating wishes and tendencies of the Confederate States,' revealed, although with cautious circumlocution, the Prussian plan, which was no other than Federal Union under Prussian supremacy.

In drawing up my scheme I had no other intention than to stimulate the consideration of the question in a concrete form, and I made this clearly understood. My object would perhaps have been attained, had not the Cabinet of Vienna, instead of allowing my draft the honour of a quiet decease, sounded an unnecessary and useless alarm by making the Prussian reply, which was addressed to Dresden and not to Vienna, the occasion of a protest sent to Berlin by Austria, and, at her suggestion, also in identic notes by Bavaria, Würtemberg, Hanover, and the Grand Duchy of Hesse. That the Saxon Government joined, though unwillingly, in this step, was of course taken in very bad part by Berlin; but it was inevitable in view of the political relations of the Central States.

I cannot take leave of the year 1860 without recording a not uninteresting episode which was closely connected with the events in Italy. At the moment when the Sardinian troops were preparing to invade the Papal States and to support the Unionist movement, Count Seebach, the Saxon envoy, who was on leave, suddenly came to me on a secret mission from the Emperor Napoleon, who took this means of hinting at Vienna, through me, that if Austria wished to oppose the invasion of the

Papal territories, he, the Emperor, would not intervene, provided no change were made as to the cession of Lombardy. Napoleon III was very fond of making these disclosures through indirect channels. He did not observe his constitutional oath very strictly, but he was almost always to be depended upon in negotiations, and Vienna might have obtained guarantees. It might have been a great opportunity, for the Article of the Treaty of Zurich relative to the States belonging to the younger branches of the House of Hapsburg was still in full force, and in the Venetian Provinces affairs were assuming a different aspect. I received for conveying the message a polite letter of thanks, which, however, did not enter into details. Indirectly, I heard the remark: 'Anyhow it cannot last,'—a repetition of what was said in Vienna after the July Revolution.

CHAPTER XIX

1862

MEETING WITH BISMARCK IN PARIS.—HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE MINISTRY.—HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH ME.

The state of affairs in Saxony made it possible for me to take a trip to London to see the second International Exhibition. I returned home viâ Paris, where I had my first lengthy interview with Prince Bismarck, who had just before been Prussian Ambassador to the Court of the Tuileries. The Saxon envoy gave us a merry dinner at the 'Petit Moulin Rouge,' which was followed the next day by an interview, during which we went into minute details, and which must have produced a certain understanding between us, although our views on German affairs did not always coincide. This is proved by a letter Bismarck wrote to me three months afterwards, immediately after his appointment to the Prussian Ministry, which I now reproduce.

BERLIN, 10*th October* 1862.

HOCHWOHLGEBORNER FREIHERR—

The recollection of our confidential conversations in Paris has inspired me with the desire, on assuming my present position, of maintaining my personal relations with your Excellency through an intercourse by letter not fettered by official forms. The pressure of unusual business has hitherto prevented me from carrying out this design. The official positions we occupy in adjoining States, and the success with which you have raised the importance of your own State throughout Germany, make me fulfil an official duty, while I at the same time gratify my personal wish, to enter into direct and confidential communication with your Excellency. I should be most grateful to learn that your inclination meets mine in this respect.

Considering your knowledge of men and affairs, I need not assure you that I stand quite aloof from all adventurous plans that have been attributed to me by political novices, and by opponents in the press. The untruthful, distorted, and disconnected reports of supposed sayings of mine, by which people have endeavoured to bring my judgment into discredit, must have been appreciated by you with a full knowledge of the real facts. I do not feel called upon to force Prussia into the channels of Sardinian policy, and if anyone in my position had any such feeling, he would have no basis upon which he could reduce his theory to practice.

With regard to the endeavours of France, I do not think that I am opposed in principle to your Excellency as to the objects attainable by German reforms. Only so long as the particular interests of the various States of Germany do not coincide with their common interests in such a manner as to make their

solidarity appear safe against all dangers, do I claim the same freedom of action for Prussia in foreign affairs as Austria notoriously exercises. In acting thus, I entertain no preconceived opinion in any respect; I only find it necessary to object to the prejudice that Prussia is more exposed to foreign attacks, and therefore more in want of foreign or German assistance, than any other State.

As to internal affairs, my most urgent duty is to preserve and to strengthen the power of the Crown against the increasing influence of the representative Chamber and the Parliamentary officials. I consider that this task can be accomplished without departing from the positive injunctions of the Constitution. I shall endeavour to spare as much as possible the feelings of sticklers for constitutional forms, and to return as soon as possible to constitutional courses—always bearing in mind, however, that our constitutional oath places 'fidelity to the King' first. Being fully convinced of your agreement with these views, I should be very thankful if you would give me your impressions on events in Prussia, and any good advice that may be suggested to you by your experience in similar circumstances.

The results achieved at Munich in the question of the Treaty of Commerce are more favourable than I expected; as an adherent of the Zollverein, this pleases me the more, because I am convinced that we can pursue no other policy than to adhere to the Treaty.

At the end of the week I purpose to go to Paris to present my letters of recall, and to arrange my removal. At this moment I am living at a hotel. Perhaps the King will proceed at the same time to the London Exhibition.

I beg of you to receive the assurance that I am your Excellency's sincerely devoted

(Signed) BISMARCK.

The future will decide whether these Memoirs will ever reach the eyes of the German Chancellor. If so, I hope he will not be displeased at my indiscretion in publishing the above letter. It is an inestimable autograph, for it proves that from the first moment of his accession to power the objects of his policy were clear to him. If it seems somewhat strange in these days to read that he did not feel called upon to force Prussia into the channels of Sardinian policy, and that anyone in his position who would feel so called upon would not have any basis upon which he could reduce his theory to practice, this assertion must not be regarded as wanting in sincerity. It was equally not his intention to persecute the 'fervent Catholics,' the 'best subjects of the King,' or to go in disguise to Canossa, to say nothing of the fact that Berlin always had two measures for Italian and Prusso-German annexations, declaring the latter to be just and the former unjust. Notwithstanding this, the Sardinian triumphs were not to be despised, for without them General Govone would not have gone to Berlin in 1866.

I now give my reply:

DRESDEN, 31*st October* 1862.

Your Excellency's much esteemed communication of the 15th inst., which I received on the 20th, would have been answered without delay, had I not inferred from its contents that an immediate reply would not

have found your Excellency at Berlin. In the expectation of your early return to that city, I do not hesitate to express my sincerest thanks to your Excellency for the proofs of gratifying confidence you have given me, which I thoroughly value and esteem; indeed, it is not only an agreeable duty, but a true satisfaction for me to do so. Although I know how far behind the great questions with which your Excellency has to deal is my modest sphere of action, you will not find me the less zealous in responding to your confidence, and in making our communications as fruitful as possible for our mutual interests.

That this result, owing to the variety of questions involved, would be more fully attained by a personal interview, must be as apparent to your Excellency as to me; and I do not doubt that his Majesty, my most gracious Master, will give me the necessary leave, should your Excellency consider an interview opportune.

Meanwhile I will not omit to express my sincerest confidence in your Excellency's character and distinguished ability, nor to add the assurance that, however valuable were the explanations you gave me, it was really not necessary to reassure me with regard to certain suppositions which I had never adopted. My wish for a protracted interview with your Excellency is connected especially with the question of the French Treaty of Commerce mentioned at the conclusion of your letter. We have given our decided support to the Prussian Government in this question, and desire to continue to do so, although there are serious objections to many clauses of the Treaty; but we do not agree with the course Prussia is pursuing with regard to the opposition of the South German States, although we must presuppose

that both Governments are united in the wish to preserve the Zollverein. I have not concealed my views on this point from Herr von Savigny, though I have taken care that this difference between us should not transpire in the newspapers. Receive, etc.

(Signed) Beust.

Some months later there was another correspondence, not directly with Herr von Bismarck, but with Herr von Savigny, who received instructions from him. Savigny had formerly been Secretary of Legation at Dresden, where he was fulfilling a mission in 1849 at the time of the May Insurrection. I saw a great deal of him when I was envoy at Berlin, and when treating of the year 1848, I mentioned that it was in his house that I first met Herr von Bismarck. He was Prussian envoy at Dresden from 1859 to 1863. He was then removed to Brussels, but stopped on his way at Berlin. It was then that the following correspondence took place :—

Berlin, 27*th February* 1853.

My dear Friend,—Herr von Bismarck desires very much to see you and to speak to you. It is by his special directions that I write this to you to-day, and I recommend you particularly, in view of the correspondence that passed between you and him last autumn, to comply with his wish. Herr von Bismarck would come to you at Dresden if the present condition of our Parliamentary debates would allow him to do so ; but, as matters stand, he thinks he can beg of you to have the kindness to come here, and as soon as possible, if your own affairs permit.

Such are my directions, which I have great

pleasure in executing, and now I will add a few remarks which they suggest to me.

I had been long expecting with certainty that the time would come when a desire would be expressed to you from Berlin for a practical understanding; you know yourself how thoroughly my wishes pointed in that direction.

The questions which in my view should now be discussed, are questions of general policy, chiefly relating, however, to the policy of our Confederation. Not only because of your rare insight into these questions, but also because of the position of Saxony, it has become desirable to consult you on the present state of affairs. In a word, you can do much good at the present moment, and therefore I beg of you to come. There is much readiness to receive practical ideas, and the good old saying: 'We must strike the iron while it is hot,' seems to me in this case especially applicable. It is to be hoped that Vienna will subsequently be grateful to you for your assistance in preparing an agreement. If you should want, now or later on, an ostensible explanation of your appearance at Berlin, the question of commercial policy will afford you one.

Herr von Bismarck, with whom I spent last evening at the Palace, intended at first to entrust Count Rantzau with this invitation, and the Count was to have proceeded to Dresden to-day; but he preferred charging me with the task, as my successor is not yet fully acquainted with the circumstances, nor with the previous correspondence. I add this in order that you may know that Count Rantzau will not be surprised when he hears that you are coming to Berlin.

The position of our Ministry is not shaken, in

spite of the persistent rumours and statements to the contrary; indeed, I may say it has become stronger owing to the events of the last few days. Even the Liberal Party (*i.e.*, Auerswald, Patow, Vincke, etc.,) holds the permanence of the Ministry to be essential. You can convince yourself of all this on the spot. If you come within the next few days you will find me still here.

I send this letter through one of my servants, who will come back here to-morrow at 3 A.M. I beg of you if possible to let him bring me word whether you are coming, and at what time we may expect you.

Meanwhile a hearty farewell from your devoted

(Signed) SAVIGNY.

To the Royal Prussian Envoy, HERR VON SAVIGNY, Berlin.

DRESDEN, 1*st March* 1863.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—As my hasty lines of yesterday have already informed you, it was not possible for me to answer your esteemed letter of the day before yesterday in time for your servant's return. I no longer delay my reply, having spoken to his Majesty the King on the subject.

I need not assure you that I feel highly honoured by the confidence shown me, and you know that I always preferred oral to written communications when agreements had to be made. I am therefore quite ready to accept an invitation to Berlin, and to take part with sincere willingness in an agreement, so far as one may be possible.

According to the general indications given in your letter, which agree in essentials with the conclusions I had formed on the state of affairs, this consultation would turn, not on a question pending between

Prussia and Saxony—for at present there is no such question—but on the affairs of Germany in general and of the Confederation in particular. But if the Royal Prussian Government thinks itself justified in expecting a favourable result from a direct discussion of these questions with the Saxon Government, that is, with me as its representative, this expectation obviously depends on the supposition that I shall be able to obtain from the other German Governments, especially from the Imperial Austrian Government, and from the Governments of the Central States, due consideration of such points of agreement as may present themselves. In this view it is obviously necessary that my position with those Governments, and the favour which they have frequently bestowed upon me, should not be weakened. Frequent experience makes me not only fear, but foresee with certainty, that my appearance at Berlin, the moment it gives rise to suspicion and rumours, will be talked of and turned to account in such a manner as would be decidedly disadvantageous to the object we pursue. In order to avoid such a result, it will be sufficient, but also absolutely necessary, to let the plain truth appear. I must therefore take the liberty, my dear friend, of requesting you to ask for the explicit sanction of the Minister President, Herr von Bismarck, to a communication being sent to our Embassy on or before my departure, acquainting it with the fact that I am coming to Berlin at the invitation of the Minister President to confer with him. I leave it to Herr von Bismarck's wisdom to decide whether this communication shall or shall not be accompanied with a statement of any particular subject as the theme of our discussion.

You yourself, my dear friend, have a far too

profound and impartial judgment on all circumstances for me not to feel assured that you fully understand my point of view, and that you will perceive in it another instance of that frankness and plain dealing which you have often praised in me.

I beg of you to be so kind as to show this letter to Herr von Bismarck, and to inform me of his answer as soon as possible. I am very sorry to gather from your note that there is little probability of my seeing you in Berlin. I should have been delighted to have had the opportunity of replying personally to all your kind expressions, and of telling you how often I think of you. Your devoted friend (Signed) Beust.

Berlin, *5th March* 1863.

My dear Friend,—I have informed Herr von Bismarck of the subject of our correspondence; and as I was able to tell him that I again admired on this occasion the chivalry of your sentiments and views, his wish of entering into closer relations with you has become even more urgent. Meanwhile he is alarmed at the idea of giving those explanations of the cause of your appearance in Berlin which you justly deem necessary, though they might only be given by word of mouth. Similar explanations which had been demanded by Count Thun, produced effects too lasting and unpleasant not to have left a great distaste here for any strong accentuation of the initiative of this or that person. At the same time Herr von Bismarck thoroughly and sincerely appreciates the motives that impose upon you, my dear friend, certain precautions at the present moment. But, considering the impression it would make on our King if he were obliged to say to him: 'My Saxon colleague cannot confer with me confidentially, unless he declares to other Courts that it is at my express desire,' he thinks

that at the present moment he must give up the realisation of the confidential *rapprochement* he so much desired.

He hopes that there will soon be an opportunity for a meeting, and he relies on finding in that case the same friendly readiness in yourself. Perhaps you will be able to find an opportunity that may bring you both together without preliminaries. You know, at least, how things stand, because I have enlightened you on my own responsibility as to what may under present circumstances best be attained. I hope events may not advance more quickly than we both wish, so that you may have time to give your valuable and tried advice in those quarters where there is already so much willingness to receive it.

How strained must our position in Germany be, if this meeting between two men, so rich in the gifts of heart and intellect, requires so much prudence and foresight only because they are German Ministers and neighbours! And yet, for my own part, I can blame neither of them because he cannot do some things and cannot omit others. If it were not for the unbounded liberty of the press our actions would be freer.

You will easily understand that it is necessary at Berlin to consider most carefully every impression made on his Majesty. There are circumstances that make his nerves particularly sensitive.

I will not conclude this letter without giving a little political news, but I do so in confidence to my old and valued friend.

The Ministry stands firmly in the King's favour. It remained firm though assailed both from without and from within. London and Paris are divided on the Polish question. There has been much depression

in the latter city since it was found that the insurgents were being supported from London. The attitude of the Cabinet of Vienna has been most correct, as we all acknowledge here.

Now, farewell, and pity your faithful friend, who, in spite of all his good will, has not been able to strengthen the bonds of union entrusted to his care. Yours, (Signed) SAVIGNY.

To his Excellency HERR VON SAVIGNY, at Berlin.

DRESDEN, 6*th March* 1863.

I cannot let you leave Berlin without thanking you for your last kind letter. It is indeed better that the journey should not take place, considering the views with which you have acquainted me ; but I must sincerely confess to you that I cannot understand how, holding these views, your esteemed chief could think of proposing a meeting with me, and above all a journey to Berlin. For even if I had been able, as I have already done at your wish, to dispense with an explanation calculated to prevent misapprehensions, Herr von Bismarck must have perceived that it would be impossible for me to avoid enquiries, especially from the envoys here, and that I could not put a padlock on my lips like Papageno in the 'Magic Flute.' But as man is not a creature devoid of will, following only vague desires and instincts, and I must therefore have set my body in motion either by my own impulse or by that of others, I should, if debarred from disclosing the Prussian initiative, have been obliged to tell an untruth, and such an untruth as might have exposed me, under the circumstances, to the most unpleasant comments. This was of course by no means Herr von Bismarck's intention, and I can therefore only regret that you

should have been put to so much unnecessary trouble. As you justly observe, our position is very strained, indeed distorted. But, believe me, one gets on best by stating things plainly as they are and as they came about. I quite understand that there should be a disinclination to enter into discussions as to who took the initiative, if it were a question of a rendezvous between the Ministers of large States like Prussia and Austria. But what on earth can it signify to a Prussian Minister if it becomes known that he has summoned the Minister of little Saxony to Berlin? 'Let him understand it who can,' as Wallestein says. You will do me the justice of owning that I have not only acted with straightforwardness, but with extreme consideration, as the former would not have forbidden me to do at once what I asked consent to my doing.

Your tidings are very welcome; and they perhaps show that the object of the intended meeting may be considered partly attained. I need not say that I shall be always ready and eager to come to such a meeting. Yours truly, (Signed) Beust.

This correspondence requires a few remarks. I submitted to the King all my diplomatic despatches, and also my private letters when they contained political allusions. The King read my letter to Herr von Savigny, and expressed his approval of it. Everybody will understand my caution in that critical time. In the interval between the dates of his two letters, Herr von Savigny came to Dresden, in order to induce me personally to go to Berlin; and on that occasion he gave me to understand, though very covertly, that it was the wish of Herr von Bismarck

that I should enter the Prussian Ministry. Though his meaning was clear to me, I could only see in this suggestion a further motive for caution, and I did not say a word on the subject to the King. But I mentioned it in the strictest confidence to my oldest and most faithful friend, Privy Councillor von Weber, and we both agreed that if I should be unequivocally asked to enter the Berlin Cabinet, I should place the decision entirely in the King's hands. Such a request was never made, however, in spite of the rumours and assertions to the contrary. Thus it remains doubtful whether Savigny said more than he was authorised to say, or whether he said what he himself desired. I must also mention a statement which he made at a later period. My colleague Friesen, after the preliminaries of Nikolsburg, returned to Berlin, where Savigny was empowered to carry on the negotiations with Saxony, and subsequently came to Vienna. Here he told me among other things the following remark made to him by Savigny: 'Why,' asked Friesen, 'is Beust so much hated by Bismarck? I am not aware that he has ever made himself personally disagreeable to him.' 'I will give you the reason,' Savigny replied with the unction so characteristic of him: 'unrequited affection!'

CHAPTER XX

1863

THE SECOND POLISH INSURRECTION—I AT BERLIN, BISMARCK AT DRESDEN.

At this period of Bismarck's début on the political stage and of the feud in Germany about commercial policy, the second Polish insurrection broke out, with a result more favourable to Prussia than to Austria. In one of Savigny's letters quoted in the previous chapter, there is the following passage: 'London and Paris are divided on the Polish question. There is much depression in Paris, as it is found that the insurgents are supported from London. The attitude of the Cabinet of Vienna has been most correct.'

'Correct! that is a word sublime,
In its right place and proper time.'

The Saxon Government, like the other German Cabinets, received overtures from the Western

Powers; but it declined, in a despatch of the 3rd of May 1863, to entertain the proposal of a joint intervention at St Petersburg, pointing out that Saxony, as a member of the German Confederation, could not independently support a diplomatic proceeding with regard to a foreign State, without acting in opposition to its Federal duty, and that, on the other hand, it could not forget that it stood in the position of an ally of one of the Powers who were taking part in the joint intervention at St Petersburg, and that that Power, Austria, had not considered it desirable to demand Saxony's co-operation. We find this loyalty to the Confederation expressed with equal precision in King John's reply to an invitation from the Emperor Napoleon to take part in a Congress. The following words occur in the King's reply: 'Si les cabinets de l'Europe veulent prêter leur concours à accomplir cette tâche ardue, si l'Allemagne, surtout ses deux grandes puissances en tête, s'y associe, je m'estimerai heureux d'y contribuer dans la modeste mesure de mes moyens et de prouver à votre Majesté combien les princes d'Allemagne, fidèlement attachés à leurs devoirs fédéraux mais exempts de tout esprit de prejugé ou de prévention, ont à cœur de resserrer les liens d'amitié et de bonne intelligence avec leurs voisins et de maintenir les mutuels rapports sur le base solide d'une confiance réciproque.'

That was assuredly 'correct,' and correct in the proper place. A country of the extent of Saxony, although it was then perfectly independent, can, in such cases, only take into consideration its international duties and the limits of its strength. The

Government of a great Power has other matters to consider also.

What Austria did during the Polish insurrection was neither sufficient for her mission nor serviceable to her interests.

I was in almost uninterrupted communication with the Saxon envoy at Vienna, Baron von Könneritz; and our correspondence took the form rather of private letters than of despatches. I wrote to him early in 1863 as follows: 'Would that a decided attitude were now assumed either on one side or the other! It seems to me that there are two courses open to Austria; that which I should choose would be to say to St Petersburg: "We are both Powers that took part in the partition of Poland, and I am ready to participate with you in restoring order." At the same time sufficient guarantees could be demanded against so barbarous a system of suppression as that of Mouravieff. Meanwhile it would be necessary to come forward in Germany with an ample Federal Reform. If Austria thinks she cannot come to so direct and unreserved an agreement with Russia, then let her pursue the other course with equal decision, namely, union with the Western Powers in the restoration of an independent Poland.'

As to the first course, we must bear in mind the political situation at that time. The Polish cause excited much less sympathy throughout Germany in 1863 than in 1831. In the latter year the Polish refugees were admired and honoured both in Germany and in France as so many Kosciuszkos, while their reception in 1863 was certainly not so enthusiastic.

This, however, did not deter me from giving Prince Gortschakoff a firm refusal (as I have stated in the second part of this work) when he peremptorily called upon me to expel the Poles who had come to Saxony.

On the other hand, one must remember what Bismarck was at that time. The game, played with such brilliant success, of misleading the world by telling it sincerely in advance what he intended doing, was then only in its first stage, when the great and small States all took him for a restless spirit, possibly dangerous, but unlikely to remain long in power. By the general public, with the exception of the Ultra-Conservatives, he was not only underrated, but also thoroughly detested. That was the time when, as he said to me during one of our conversations at Salzburg, 'people spat on the ground when he passed.' A decided action on the part of Austria in either of the directions I have indicated would, if it had been entered upon at the right time, scarcely have been impeded by Prussia.

I have not hesitated to admit that I should have chosen the first of the courses above indicated. It possessed the advantage of a sincere and lasting reconciliation with Russia,* and the displeasure of the Western Powers would perhaps have been less pronounced had Austria's attitude been negative throughout, than it proved itself to be when she stopped after going with them half-way.

* There was no reason to suppose that St Petersburg would have rejected such an offer. There were moments of great despondency in the Russian capital. 'Vous allez voir que nous perdrons la Pologne,' were the words that escaped the Russian envoy at Dresden, and Prince Gortschakoff owed his brilliant career and his popularity to the pertinacity with which he maintained almost alone a policy of resistance.

But if Austria was loath to take the part of Russia so decidedly, it would have been better had she closely allied herself with the Western Powers: her true policy was either a sincere and lasting friendship with Russia, or the thorough and permanent weakening of that Power.

What was said by Savigny about France and England disagreeing because it had been discovered in Paris that the London Cabinet was supporting the insurgents was not in accordance with the facts. The truth is that Napoleon gave way because he heard that Austria would not let herself be influenced, and that his reserved attitude reminded the London Cabinet of the experiences of the Crimean War. Napoleon III had made very positive and extensive proposals at Vienna, as usual not officially, but in a memorandum entrusted to Prince Metternich.

I have said that there were only two courses that could be of advantage to Austria—either a sincere and lasting friendship with Russia, or the thorough and permanent weakening of that Power. Neither one course nor the other was pursued. Instead of greater friendship, there were new disagreements, partly owing to the part Austria took at first in the platonic pressure exercised by the Western Powers, and partly to Austria's humane treatment of the Polish refugees, as contrasted with the more than 'correct' measures of the Prussian Government on the Polish frontier; and, far from being weakened, Russia's position after the insurrection was stronger than ever. Thus Russia owed a debt of gratitude to Prussia, to be paid at the expense of Austria, to whom Russia was more

indebted for the rejection of Napoleon's proposals than to the Cabinet of Berlin; while Austria's relations with the Western Powers grew colder, and she was obliged to keep up a state of siege in Galicia.

This was Bismarck's first step in the 'advance against Austria,' which he had already foreshadowed in his Frankfort Reports. It was not to be the last. But I must return to the beginning of my official relations with the present Chancellor of the German Empire. 'Unrequited affection' did not prevent my going to Berlin some months later. The chief object of our conference was the French Treaty, with regard to which we strove to facilitate the return and the retreat of the South German Governments. Our interviews also extended to other questions, and passed off satisfactorily. My reception was very polite and even cordial. I remember our walking one evening near the Wallner Theatre, and pursuing our conversation. We heard peals of laughter issuing from the building, and Bismarck said: 'They are making bad jokes about us.' Farces were then being performed at Berlin in which I appeared as one of the characters, and I expressed a wish to see myself represented on the stage by the actor Helmerding, a wish that was not gratified.*

Some weeks afterwards Herr von Bismarck re-

* When I was Ambassador in London, Mr Gladstone, who was then in office, was caricatured with his colleague, Mr Lowe, in a piece called 'The Happy Land,' at the Court Theatre. This annoyed the Premier, and the piece was taken off. When I was Austrian Chancellor, the Director of Police announced to me one morning that I was being caricatured on the stage in a similar manner at a little suburban theatre, and asked me what was to be done. 'Secure a box,' said I, 'that I may amuse my friends!' The box was taken, and my friends and I went to the theatre; but when the performance reached the point where I was to enter, my representative did not appear. The actors had perceived me in the house, and omitted the scene. Nor was it again introduced at the further performances of the play.

turned my visit at Dresden before following his royal master, viâ Leipzig, to Gastein. We parted on the best of terms. Unfortunately our relations were destined to be disturbed before long by accidental circumstances for which I was in no way to blame. I will give the details in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXI

1863

THE CONGRESS OF PRINCES AT FRANKFORT.

Shortly after the interchange of visits with Bismarck, the German Princes were invited by the Emperor of Austria to take part in a Congress at Frankfort. This was a complete surprise for Dresden, neither more nor less so than for other towns, and I had no idea that it was coming. The omniscient newspapers, however, were of a different opinion. This would not have been of any importance in itself. It was only unwelcome inasmuch as it was not personally convenient for me, as will be seen by what follows, to be considered the originator of the Vienna work of reform. What was still more inconvenient was that Herr von Bismarck must have been made suspicious by the very obvious thought that I had concealed something from him of which I was, if not the originator, at least the

accessory. I shall revert to the subject of confidence later on.

I pass over the details of the interviews at Gastein between the Emperor Francis Joseph and King William, which were not known to me at the time, or of the subsequent invitation to Frankfort, especially as they have since been made known more or less fully. I repeat that at Dresden the invitation was quite unexpected, and I wrote to our envoy at Vienna: 'A very dangerous game; but as it must be played, we shall take part in it.' We did not then know the Austrian plan. We were fully convinced that all the Confederate Princes would accept the Imperial invitation.

With silent sorrow, and yet with a swelling heart, do I look back as an Austrian on those brilliant Frankfort days, not because I recall to my mind the sumptuous processions, the banquet in the 'Römer,' and the splendid fireworks, but because they show me vividly how great and important was Austria's position in Germany only a few years before her withdrawal. That all the sovereigns came at the Emperor's summons, in spite of the at first doubtful and then decided refusal of the King of Prussia—that even those obeyed the call who had hitherto sided almost exclusively with Prussia, like the Grand Dukes of Baden, Oldenburg and Mecklenburg Schwerin—was an unequivocal proof of unfailing deference towards the old Imperial Dynasty and its illustrious head; and this tradition gained in strength after the assembled Princes had had the opportunity of convincing themselves of the dignified and business-

like conduct of their deliberations. Public opinion in Germany, too, hailed the Austrian initiative with enthusiasm, and looked with confidence on the hoisting of the black, red, and yellow flag.

I cannot forgive the Deputy Dr Jacques, a man whom in other respects I greatly esteem, for saying at the diet of jurists at Cassel: 'Formerly Germany and Austria were united by a *mariage de convenance*, while now the union of Germany and Prussia is a true love-match.' However this saying may apply to the present, it fails to give an accurate view of the past. It was because, and not in spite of, the idea of the Frankfort Congress having emanated from Austria, that it met with so much sympathy. Notwithstanding the aversion to Metternich's system before 1848, and to the clerical reaction after 1848, the Austrians were welcomed from the far South to the extreme North of Germany, and this traditional and ineradicable affection had visibly increased in strength after Schmerling took office. Had he accompanied the Emperor, he might have been of great use, considering his previous residence at Frankfort. But he was not the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and it was the custom in Vienna to include the affairs of the German Confederation in that category. I have stated elsewhere how useful it would have been in former times, had there been a Minister for German affairs with a separate department, like that of the Court Chancellor for Hungary.

The silent opposition of Prussia, which soon manifested itself in the result of the elections, was the chief cause of Austria's failure. But Austria did

not lose anything by her failure or by the frustration of the plan of reform. The Frankfort episode should have been regarded and treated merely as a reconnaissance. From this point of view it was not unsatisfactory, and all that was wanted was to come forward at the next opportunity not with proposals of reform, but with a manifestation that would stir the German nation to the heart. The kindness of fortune afforded this opportunity within a few months; yet Austria turned her back on the confederates who had obeyed her call—placing themselves on the 'correct' Federal footing which happened on this occasion to be popular—and gave her hand to Prussia, who had treated her invitation with contempt, in order to support her in an 'incorrect' proceeding against the Federal majority on a question of Federal Law in which Austria only had an interest in so far, and no farther, as she was a member of the Confederation.

Before coming to the last stages of the Princes' Congress at Frankfort, I must not forget an episode that occurred at its commencement: the journey of King John to Baden-Baden, which he undertook, as is well-known, at the request of the assembled Princes. I had the honour of accompanying his Majesty. It was my task to interview the Prussian Minister President, Herr von Bismarck. We arrived in the afternoon. I looked for Herr von Bismarck at the 'Stephanienbad,' where Napoleon was staying in 1860. He was out, but soon returned. Dr Busch has made statements in his 'Reichskanzler' about our interview which are pure inventions. It was late,

and Bismarck asked me to stay for dinner, an invitation which I gladly accepted. His first words were: 'You come to drag us down to perdition; you will not succeed.' 'I do not understand you,' I rejoined. 'If your King goes to Frankfort to-morrow, appears in the Assembly, and greets the Princes with hearty words, saying that he is ready to take part in their deliberations, but that as he had gone through two severe courses of medical treatment, he must request them to excuse him for a while, and will return some weeks later, the Congress will leave Frankfort on the following day.' To which Bismarck replied: 'What you say is probable, very probable, but not certain.' When I began a further attempt to persuade him with the words: 'Hitherto you have given me your confidence,' he interrupted me, saying: 'I have lost all confidence since you made your speech at Leipzig.'* Is it not truly remarkable that the founder of the German empire should have withdrawn his confidence from me because I spoke of Germany and German Unity at a public meeting? As it is his habit to assume a jesting tone even when he is most annoyed, he added: 'In this way you only mislead your friends. You had no truer friend in Prussia than General Manteuffel. On reading your speech, he was taken ill, and had to keep his bed for twenty-four hours, during which he exclaimed incessantly: "How mistaken one can be in such a man!"' Of his royal master, who, according to Busch, was laid up by the worry caused him by King John and myself, he only said: 'The King became very sulky at the

* At a festival held in 1863 by the Gymnastic Societies of Germany.

prospect of a visit from your master. He says: "If they had only sent me my son-in-law, I should have rated him soundly; but they actually send me the venerable King of Saxony!"'

The composition of the King's reply, in which he refused to accept the invitation signed by all the Princes, must have given a great deal of trouble, for Herr von Bismarck did not bring it to me till late at night. A special train soon took us back to Frankfort.

It was towards the close of the debates and the final drafting of the amended scheme, that the King informed me that the Emperor desired a private conference with the Kings, the Elector, and the Grand Duke of Hesse, with the co-operation of the Ministers; and he told me to be in readiness to give my opinion as to what should be done. 'My opinion,' I said, 'has long been formed. Prussia opposes the decisions of the Princes. To proceed without Prussia I consider as impossible as it would be incompatible with the Federal Constitution. It is, therefore, essential to come to an understanding with Prussia, who will probably maintain her present point of view. But she will find it far more difficult to do so when the constitutional scheme drawn up by the Congress has been accepted by the representative Assemblies of the various States. Thus it is advisable that the Diets of those countries whose sovereigns have signed the scheme, should be convened for the purpose of electing delegates to proceed to a meeting to be held in some town of Central Germany, Nürnberg, for instance, where the constitutional scheme should be

either accepted or rejected without discussion. Now it has never happened that such a meeting has dissolved itself; it is therefore more than probable that the majority will be in favour of the scheme.*

King John was pleased with my suggestion, but when I saw him again his Majesty informed me that the Emperor, who had been with him during the interval, desired me not to develop my idea in too sharp and decided a manner, out of consideration for the King of Bavaria, whose nervous excitement had risen to such a height that it was necessary not to ruffle him in any way. I consequently preferred to remain totally silent during the sitting; but after the Emperor had repeatedly requested the Ministers to speak, as I happened to be their *doyen* owing to the accidental absence of the Bavarian Minister, I was compelled to state my opinion. I did so, however, in such guarded language, bearing in mind the Emperor's previous injunction, that far from convincing my hearers, I am certain that I did not even make myself intelligible to them.

When the Congress was drawing to a close, an incident occurred which might easily have been turned to its advantage. A declaration had arrived from the Danish Government which was absolutely insulting to the Confederation. I hastened to draw attention to it, and to express the opinion that the Emperor should propose to the Council of Princes a suitable rejoinder to the provocation which had been received. Such a proposal would certainly have been accepted,

* Dr Moritz, then envoy of Bremen, says in his Reminiscences that I communicated this idea to him.

and would have made a favourable impression on public opinion. I spoke on the subject with Count Rechberg, who was not averse to the idea, but declared that it was essential to come first of all to an agreement with Prussia—that very Prussia whose co-operation had been dispensed with before and during the Congress. However, we agreed that when the Congress was over, a motion should be brought forward at the first sitting of the Bundestag. Thursday was the usual day for the Diet to hold its debates; the sovereigns had left Frankfort on the previous day. I went to the Palace of Prince Thurn and Taxis, and was there informed that the sitting had been postponed.

CHAPTER XXII

1863–1864

DEATH OF THE KING OF DENMARK.—THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN QUESTION IN THE DIET AND IN THE CHAMBERS.—THE LONDON CONFERENCE.

One of the most important periods of my life and of my political activity was included in the second half of 1863 and the first half of 1864. I allude to my intervention in the affair of the Elbe Duchies and my participation in the London Conference. My appointment as the representative of the German Confederation in a European Assembly was not only a high distinction, but it acquired historical importance from the fact that it was the only time since the formation of the Confederation, fifty years previously, that that body had ever had a representative. Some ill-conditioned wit remarked that the Confederation died from the effects of that extraordinary effort; it certainly did not survive it long.

I can assert with truth that the honour I then received was by no means expected by me, although one might have supposed so in view of the fact that my almost unanimous election was very popular, a result which had been brought about by the firm attitude I assumed in my speeches, and above all in my correspondence with the English Cabinet. But all this had taken place at a time when I never dreamed that the Confederation would take part in a European Conference, much less that I should be appointed its plenipotentiary. I do not doubt that my Schleswig-Holstein popularity decided more than one German Government to vote for my appointment to the London Conference. That Herr von Bismarck favoured it, may be explained simply by the expectation he had that I would act with vigour—which he desired, as he hoped thereby to escape from the Treaty of London of 1852. Count Rechberg gave me his vote perhaps for an opposite reason, as he had always maintained that it would be neither right nor safe for the Confederation to attack that Treaty, and he hoped to find in a German Minister a certain amount of consideration for the desires of the Cabinet of Vienna. This would agree with a story then in vogue, whether founded or unfounded, I do not know. Count Rechberg is reported to have said in confidential circles that he preferred me to Pfordten, because I was more vain, more pliant, and therefore more easily seduced. At the Conference I certainly did not justify that view.

It would be far beyond my task, and it would be an unnecessary trial of my reader's patience if I were

to give a full account of the course taken by the Schleswig-Holstein question during the twenty years preceding the London Conference.

In the years immediately preceding that event, frequent and serious complaints on the part of Germany were met by harsh rejoinders on the part of Denmark. In the previous chapter I mentioned that I endeavoured, before the conclusion of the Frankfort Congress, to give it the credit of having inflicted a rebuff on Danish arrogance. Though my efforts were unsuccessful, the Frankfort episode had the advantage of precipitating the action of the Federal Assembly in the Schleswig-Holstein question, which may also have been partly hastened by the desire of the Governments to make the public forget the negative result of the Congress of Princes. Within a few months they decided to call upon Hanover and Saxony to intervene by force of arms in Holstein on behalf of the Confederation. Frederick VII, King of Denmark, died shortly afterwards, and from that moment the task of the Confederation assumed a different aspect. A Federal execution could only be imagined as directed against a sovereign and a Government recognised by the Confederation as legitimate. But as soon as there was a doubt on the latter point, the Confederation should no longer have spoken of 'execution,' because that term involved an indirect acknowledgment of him who was then in power, *i.e.*, the King of Denmark. The 'execution' was followed by the 'occupation' until the question of law was decided. It was imperative that this should be done within the shortest possible time,

so as to settle the question whether the Duke of Holstein, a country which undoubtedly belonged to the Confederation, also had claims on Schleswig. An affirmative reply would have obliged the Confederation to take possession of the country even by force of arms if necessary.

This was the view adopted by the Saxon Government, which adhered to it throughout. In this respect Saxony was in agreement with the majority of the Central and Minor States; but she took the initiative in the matter, for she moved and carried in the Federal Assembly the rejection of the credentials of the Danish envoy and his removal.

Quite different was the view taken by the two great German Powers. Their decision was influenced by the fact that they had signed the London Protest of 1852, whereby the succession of the Danish monarchy, including Schleswig-Holstein, was settled on Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Glücksburg in consequence of the renunciation of the Hessian branch of the family. But this protocol merely carried out an agreement made several years previously at Warsaw, which was preceded by negotiations with the Danish Government, resulting in various by no means unimportant concessions on the part of the latter. The Duke of Augustenburg, on the other hand, had renounced his claim to a pecuniary compensation, but this renunciation could not affect the rights of his son. The London agreement had never been submitted to the German Confederation, and had therefore not been ratified by that body.

It must be acknowledged that the position of the two German Powers was not quite clear; but no one can justly maintain that it debarred them from allowing events to take a constitutional course. Neither Austria nor Prussia would have found her European position injured if she had allowed the Confederation to exercise its right as the party most nearly concerned in the matter. The accession of Christian IX to the throne of Denmark, which had been settled by Treaty, would not have been interfered with even though his rule over Schleswig-Holstein had been questioned. The Confederation was not bound to consider the London Protocol, and it was the duty of Austria and Prussia, as Federal Powers, to protect its legal rights and to enforce its decisions. This duty was the more imperative, as the question at issue concerned the liberation of a German country from foreign rule, and as public opinion in the whole of Germany, including Austria, was favourable to the claims of the Augustenburg family, and to the German Confederation which supported them. Whether the failure of the signatory Powers of 1852 to obtain the sanction of the Confederation had been intentional or not, they had to bear the consequences of their omission. Such were the views maintained by me at that time against the two great Cabinets.

I now come to the momentous decision of the 14th of January. Austria and Prussia moved that the Danish Government should be called upon to alter its constitution, and should be threatened, in the event of non-compliance, with the occupation of Schleswig.

The rejection of their motion was followed by a declaration by the two States that they would occupy Schleswig in their capacity of European Powers, and soon afterwards by the Danish War.

CHAPTER XXIII

1863–1864

THE WAR BETWEEN GERMANY AND DENMARK.—THE LONDON CONFERENCE.

The Danish War will be an incomprehensible incident in the history of Austria; less so in that of Prussia.

For both powers it was a sort of self-contradiction. Though members of the German Confederation, they had altered, in their capacity of European Powers, a dynastic succession affecting the interests of the Confederation, without its consent, and in favour of a Prince who had no right to it. This Prince ascended the throne, and then these same powers, in their capacity of European Powers, waged war upon him, depriving him and the monarchy, which the alteration of the succession had been intended to preserve in its integrity, of two districts, and taking possession themselves of those districts, after having recently declared in their capacity of European Powers, at a European

Conference, that the legitimate ruler of the districts in question was a prince supported by the majority of the German Federal States.

Much as I regret doing so, I must speak strongly on this matter. There is something peculiarly offensive to the public sense of justice when two great States attack a small one with forces twenty times as large as those of their antagonist. On this subject I was obliged to listen to much that was unpleasant in Paris and London. It cannot be objected that the same would have happened on an even larger scale if the entire Confederation had resorted to arms, which would indeed have been the case had there been no other means of obtaining Schleswig for the Duke of Holstein. The distinction is obvious. If the strong have to defend a right against the weak, the weakness of the offender cannot be urged as a reason against using force if necessary. This was the position of the Confederation, not of Austria or Prussia. Even the Berlin papers made the pertinent remark that Russia, France, or England would have had the same right to call the King of Denmark to account, and to wage war upon him.

And yet it was a hazardous enterprise that might have brought the Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna into fearful straits had it not been successful. Had wiser counsels prevailed at Copenhagen, Denmark would have evacuated Schleswig with a solemn protest, but without drawing the sword. This would have been no disgrace, considering the immense superiority of the enemy. The Austro-Prussian troops would have occupied Schleswig, and the then inevitable

intervention of Russia, France and England would have produced negotiations, the result of which would have been in the most favourable case that Denmark would have conceded the demand relative to the Constitution. Schleswig would then have had to be evacuated, and Austria and Prussia would have been obliged, as European Powers, to prevent the occupation of Schleswig in favour of the Prince who had been recognised by the Confederation as the legitimate Duke of Holstein. This, in view of the public feeling of Germany at that time, would have produced a dangerous crisis. The danger was overcome, thanks to the good fortune that always attended Bismarck, and also to a conspicuous quality of that remarkable man which is exactly described by the English word 'unscrupulousness.' It is well known, and I shall mention the circumstance again in a future chapter, that the Saxon troops which were entrusted with the duty of carrying out the decision of the Bund were driven from Holstein without ceremony after the conclusion of the Peace of Vienna. In the following year, 1865, I met Bismarck at Gastein. He spoke of this incident not without regret, but added in a quotation from Schiller—

'It is the curse of evil deeds
That they must ever evil deeds beget.'

'And,' he continued, 'had you and your friends not opposed our motion, your troops would have been the first in the field, and would have taken part in the battle of Düppel.' 'You are forgetting,' I rejoined, 'what might have happened had the Danes refused to fight.' 'I had taken precautions

against that,' was Bismarck's answer. 'I made the Cabinet of Copenhagen believe that England had threatened us with active intervention, if hostilities should be opened, although, as a matter of fact, England did nothing of the kind.' 'Well,' I said, 'that is certainly more than the Confederation would have done!'

All this did not prevent the Prussian, as well as the Austrian, Army from performing brilliant feats of arms. But such a contradictory and objectionable undertaking could only be explained in one way, and it was not difficult to discover what was Prussia's interest in the affair. When, shortly after 1860, my friend Savigny was envoy at Dresden, long before the question of the Danish Succession was mooted, he was constantly talking to me of Schleswig-Holstein, and as he wore his heart on his sleeve, as the saying goes, he more than once let fall the words: 'You must understand that the Elbe Duchies will have to become part of Prussia.' It was an old idea, but it was not realized until it was taken up by Bismarck's genius and energy.

But what interest had Austria in the affair? However much she may have been inspired by friendly feelings towards Prussia as her colleague in the Confederation, she had no interest in the extension of Prussian territory, and as little in creating a new province for herself beyond the Elbe and the Eider. And meanwhile she allowed a splendid opportunity to escape her.

It was almost a miracle. Public opinion in Germany grew enthusiastic on a question of legitimacy

and of the formation of a new Middle State. The former is in accord with Austrian traditions; the latter with Austrian interests. But things of far greater moment were involved. The time had arrived for Austria to take the lead in a question as to which all the German Governments and representative assemblies were agreed—at Vienna as at Berlin, at Munich and Dresden as at Stuttgart, Hanover and Karlsruhe—a question, in short, as to which even the whole press of Germany was almost unanimous. But Prussia? Well, either Prussia would have joined Austria, thereby making success easier, more certain, and not less honourable; or she would have offered resistance, either passive or active. The former, which would certainly not have been in accordance with the previous policy of the master of Prussia's destinies, could only have added to the credit of an active intervention on the part of Austria; and as to the latter, I may ask all those who still recollect the state of Germany in those days, would such resistance have been possible? would it have been permitted by the Prussians themselves? I remember, indeed, that something was said of threats; but it is one thing to threaten, another to act; and although Prussia's military power was even then not inconsiderable, Prince Bismarck has shown on more than one occasion that he understands that a policy which pursues national objects cannot attain its end by force of arms alone.

But the London Protocol? I think I have fully shown in what way the two principal German Powers carried out that Protocol. If it could have been

treated so cavalierly by a single power, Austria could have discarded it with equal or even greater ease on the ground of her Federal duties. I know (as will be seen in the second part of this work) from a conversation between Count Rechberg and myself in the Austrian Reichsrath, that a laudable regard for the maintenance of the peace of Europe, and a desire to avoid the intervention of foreign Powers, were the leading motives of Austria at that period; but if France, England and Russia did not intervene in a war undertaken in defiance of German public opinion, they would have been still less inclined to do so had the attack on Denmark been made with the enthusiastic approval of all Germany.

After the German Powers had been standing for some time with drawn swords at an equal distance from Europe and from the Confederation, the moment came when the want of a mutual understanding was felt. This was the origin of the London Conference. The Confederation was invited to take part in it, and to send a representative. I was chosen to fill that post by all the votes of the Federal States but three, one of which was the Saxon vote that had been given to Pfordten.

CHAPTER XXIV

1864

THE LONDON CONFERENCE.

I CAUSED some displeasure to the members of the Conference by obliging them to await my arrival for several days. After the first sitting, which took place without me, they had to adjourn until I made my appearance. Much annoyance was expressed at Berlin. 'Bismarck is beside himself with rage,' wrote Count Hohenthal, the Saxon envoy. But my delay was excusable. I had neither brought about nor expected my election. As the head of two departments, I could not leave at a moment's notice to be absent for weeks or perhaps for months. They were particularly angry at my not taking the shortest way to London, and stopping at Frankfort. But I had to go there to get my credentials. My instructions did not delay me.

I met several Ministers at Frankfort: Hügel of

Würtemberg, Roggenbach of Baden, and Dalwigk of Darmstadt; and at our meeting we discussed the question whether an official should be attached to the mission. I had a secretary* in my suite, and I thought he would be sufficient; but in consequence of the above suggestion, I proposed that an official occupying a high position, but not in the service of Saxony, should accompany me, and I selected the Hessian Legationsrath Hofmann, who was recommended to me by Dalwigk, and proceeded with me to London. He has been much spoken of since, and he soon rose to the highest posts, not only in the service of Hesse, but also in that of the German empire. The recommendation of my friend Dalwigk was, therefore, not to be despised; and I regret that Hofmann, for whom I had a great personal liking, and whose abilities I thoroughly appreciated, could not find a suitable field for his talents in London. In the Conference he, of course, did not take part; I myself drew up the reports to the Federal Assembly, and when there was occasion for direct communications with the English Government, I either carried them on myself, or entrusted them to the Saxon envoy, Count Vitzthum, whose long residence in London particularly qualified him for the task. Thus Hofmann had scarcely anything to do but to answer the endless letters and telegrams that reached me from all parts of Germany, and above all from Schleswig-Holstein. As usual, the polite Saxon thought it unseemly to leave them unanswered.

* My excellent private secretary, Fischer, who was my faithful companion two years later at Prague and Vienna.

Some of them, however, like the two following telegrams, clearly did not require an answer. One was: 'Long live Beust! Down with Russell! Tell him so'; the other: 'Do not forget that you represent the most cultivated of nations.' I could not help admiring the skill with which Hofmann varied the terms of his replies. Not until the end of the Conference was there an opportunity of giving him a more important occupation, namely, the drawing up of the final report on the whole of the proceedings of the Conference. He did the work admirably, but I was so pleased with it on reading it over hastily for the first time, that I unfortunately omitted carefully to examine the wording of each phrase, and one in particular escaped me which was very provoking and denunciatory towards Prussia and Austria. Soon after my return to Dresden, the Prussian envoy, Herr von Schulenburg, handed me a note from his Government speaking in appreciative terms of my action at the Conference, and adding that Prussia would gladly have offered me an outward recognition of my efforts if the unfortunate phrase in my report had not rendered it impossible for her to do so. Seven years later, when I was an Austrian Minister, I received the order of the Black Eagle, so that I could console myself for the delay; but it is odd to think of the eminent position attained at Berlin by the very man who was the cause of the reprimand thus administered to me.

I was made to feel England's displeasure even before I had entered the Conference. Soon after my arrival I received an invitation to a soirée at Lady Palmerston's. Her husband was then Premier, and

lived at Cambridge House, in Piccadilly. Mr, afterwards Sir Charles, Murray was on leave in London; and when he perceived me at the door of the first room, he told Lord Palmerston of my arrival. Lord Palmerston shook hands with me, but instead of addressing me, continued his conversation with one of the guests. Only two years previously he had received me in the most cordial manner. I was not disconcerted by his rudeness, for I at once remarked to some members of the Diplomatic Corps with whom I was acquainted, and who happened to be present, in the most cheerful tone, and loud enough for him to hear: 'Quel dommage qu'il n'y ait pas ici un journaliste Allemand; comme cela ferait mon affaire!' I never entered his house after that evening, nor did I meet him again, but I heard him once more in Parliament, and could not help admiring the strength of his voice, and the clearness and fluency with which he spoke, though he was then more than eighty years of age.

It is scarcely possible to form a conception at the present time of the bitter feeling which then animated all classes in England, high and low, against Germany. If a copy of *Punch* of the year 1864 were substituted by accident for one of the present year, the reader would rub his eyes with amazement, for he would see Punch standing between two men in uniform, the one on the left with his head bound up, the other on the right asking pardon on his knees. The former was the King of Denmark, the latter the King of Prussia. And, strange to say, this bitter feeling was aggravated by an element that usually soothes and reconciles: womanly influence. A year

before, the Prince of Wales had married the daughter of Christian IX, and his young bride had won all hearts from the first moment. It happened more than once that I passed Marlborough House in the afternoon on my way from the Travellers' Club to the Grosvenor Hotel. It was the hour when the Princess usually took her drive, and although 'time is money,' thousands of people were assembled there daily, waiting to see her Royal Highness. This spontaneous popularity has never waned; the Princess Alexandra enjoys it now as much as ever.

I said above that even in the highest circles the feeling against Germany was extremely unfriendly. I was especially made to feel this by the family of the Duke of Cambridge. At an earlier period, when I was Saxon Minister-President, and at a later period, when I was Austrian Ambassador, I stood high in the favour of the Duchess of Cambridge, for whom I had the sincerest esteem; but during the Danish Conference I was treated as a stranger to her and to her family. My position with regard to the Queen, however, was very different. Lord Clarendon, who was in the Cabinet, but not as Foreign Minister, received me with extreme coldness, perhaps in remembrance of the lesson I had given him ten years previously, although I had seen a good deal of him a year before at Frankfort during the Congress of Princes. During the Conference he came to the rescue of Lord John Russell, who was almost totally ignorant of the French language. I begged him to inform me whether I could have an interview with the Queen. Although three years had elapsed since

the death of Prince Albert, her Majesty lived in the deepest retirement, and never appeared at the Drawing-rooms, a practice which she did not resume until after 1870. Lord Clarendon said he would apply to the Queen, but with a tone which clearly meant: 'You will have to wait a long time.' The Queen was then staying at Osborne, in the Isle of Wight. When I again saw Lord Clarendon, who had meanwhile been there, he was like another being, most amiable and polite. The Queen said at once that she would gladly see me, as I was an old friend, and that she would send me an invitation to Osborne. No sooner had the Court Circular announced that I had been staying two days at Osborne, than I received countless invitations from the highest society. The free-born Englishman was always a greater courtier than the enslaved Russian. But I will not be ungrateful, nor will I forget that even then I experienced the hospitality of England, although I did not enjoy it to its fullest extent until later, when I was no longer under a political cloud. I gladly and vividly remember my stay in those days at the charming estate of Strawberry Hill, near Twickenham, and the amiability of its mistress, Lady Waldegrave.

My visit to Osborne was not only an honour and a pleasure, but I do not think I am saying too much when I add that it greatly assisted the cause of which I was the representative. The Queen, as was then her habit, was not present at dinner, but she appeared after it with her daughters, the Princesses Helena and Louise. I had a long conversation with her Majesty, and it was resumed next day in the garden.

The Schleswig-Holstein question was the sole topic. The Queen was thoroughly versed in it; the question was, in the truest sense of the word, a legacy of Prince Albert. Consequently my task was not difficult, but I can say that I performed it skilfully. I maintained, with all the eloquence of conviction, that all Germany would rise as one man if an armed intervention of France or England (which at that time seemed imminent) were to take place; and I have been assured on very trustworthy authority that in this case the Queen followed the example of her grandfather, George III, who in the early part of his reign refused to be fettered by constitutional trammels and frequently carried his point by a personal decision. I do not ascribe any merit to myself; but I can claim a recognition of the fact that, realising the duty incumbent on me, I considered not only the private interests of Saxony, but the general interests of Germany. It would have suited the purpose of Saxony far better had France and England intervened, for such a step would have involved the action of the Confederation, thus preventing the one-sided decision about the Duchies which paved the way for 1866; and the Saxon troops would then have had the honour of being first in the field, instead of the humiliation which they had to endure after the Peace of Vienna.

Before describing the course of the Conference as concisely as possible, I will draw a picture of its members, which may perhaps be more interesting to my readers than the Conference itself.

The President deserves the first place. It is peculiar to England that changes of Ministry are

caused there not by personal but by party considerations. In other countries it sometimes happens that men who are not diplomatists are appointed Ministers of Foreign Affairs; of this striking examples are to be found in Thiers and Guizot in France, and Manteuffel in Prussia. But what never happens elsewhere is that the Foreign Minister gives up his department on grounds unconnected with foreign policy to a colleague, taking the department of the latter in exchange. This was the case with Palmerston and Russell, who were alternately Premiers and Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs. Both were undoubtedly statesmen of the highest capacity; but whoever knew them will be of opinion that the one was just suited for Foreign Affairs, while the other was qualified for everything but Foreign Affairs. By his easy and attractive and yet very dignified manners, by his knowledge of foreign countries and languages, by his keen sympathy with the national currents which influence the intercourse of England with other Powers, Palmerston was the very ideal of a Foreign Minister. Russell, to whom England owes the Reform Bill and very necessary educational reforms, was remarkable as an orator and a writer, but was quite destitute of the qualities which were so conspicuous in Palmerston. He never had much success in Foreign Affairs, either in the question of Poland, in that of Schleswig-Holstein, or in that of the American Civil War. He was Foreign Secretary when the Conference met, and thus was called upon to preside over it, but he had an assistant, whether at his desire or not I cannot say, in Lord Clarendon,

a thorough diplomatist. This was very necessary, for Lord John Russell—whose three nephews, the Duke of Bedford, the late Lord Ampthill, and Lord Arthur Russell, spoke French like Frenchmen and German like Germans—was so ignorant of French, a language essential to diplomacy, that he could only express himself in it with the greatest difficulty. Under these circumstances, Lord Clarendon was the real President; but the consideration which he was obliged to show to Lord John Russell, and which he showed with his usual dexterity, had the result of making the conduct of the deliberations rather weak—a circumstance which could not fail to injure the Conference itself.

When I look back on past times, I sometimes feel as if I had attained the age of Methusalah, so many of my colleagues have preceded me to the grave. Of my Dresden Ministry, which lasted seventeen years, I am the sole survivor: of my Viennese colleagues, ten have departed this life,* and of the members of the London Conference, perhaps only the Danes are still living. If I speak of the people I met, I shall bear in mind the saying 'de mortuis nil nisi bene' which I shall cordially respect, in regard to all of them but one —of whom, however, I shall not say anything evil.

I shall first mention the German members. They were old and valued friends. Count Apponyi, of whom I shall speak more later on, I had known for thirty years. The Prussian Ambassador, Count Bernstorff, was also an old friend, and so were his

* Majlath, Wüllerstorff, John Larisch, Becke, Lonyay, Giskra, Berger, Brestel, Tschabuschnigg, to say nothing of the Hungarian Ministers.

secretary, Herr von Balan, and Baron Biegeleben. A leading part was played by Count Bernstorff, whose colleague I was destined to become later on as Austrian Ambassador in London, after having been so before as Secretary of Legation in Paris and Chargé d'Affaires at Munich. Count Bernstorff, whose abilities were underrated in Prussia, as I have frequently had occasion to observe, developed at the Conference a thorough knowledge of the historical side of the question, to the study of which he was led more than others by the double circumstance of his family connection with Denmark and of his property in the Duchy of Lauenburg.

I found a new and remarkably agreeable acquaintance in the French Ambassador, Prince de Latour d' Auvergne. His advocacy of Denmark was, like his opposition to Germany, somewhat mild. I saw a good deal of him outside the Conference, and we soon became excellent friends. I welcomed with joy some years later his appointment as French Ambassador to the Court of Vienna at the commencement of the Franco-German War, and yet I owe to this friendship many trying hours. In contrast to the Duc de Gramont and the Marquis de Casaux, who replaced him as Chargé d'Affaires, he thoroughly understood the political situation, his conduct showing much discretion; and for that reason I own that I was good-natured enough to yield to his request 'to put in a good word for Paris.' War had then already been declared. I shall say more about this in the second volume.

I conclude with a very important personage, the

Russian Ambassador. Count Brunnow's appearance was most striking and characteristic. He, too, was an old acquaintance, having been Ambassador in London when I was the Saxon Resident Minister there. He occupied that post uninterruptedly, with the exception of the two years of the Crimean War, until his retirement from the service in 1875.

It was once said of a person now no more, who held very high appointments, that he was 'une incapacité méconnue.' This could not be applied to Brunnow, but he might have been described as 'une capacité trop connue et trop vantée.' He was looked upon in London for a long time as a sort of diplomatic oracle. Nevertheless he did not prove himself equal to his task at the most momentous crisis of his career, the period immediately preceding the Crimean War; for it was owing to his reports that the Cabinet of St Petersburg would not seriously believe that England really meant to go to war, and that there would be a Franco-English Alliance. Accordingly, when Brunnow was appointed envoy at Darmstadt during the war, the difference between the populations of London and Darmstadt was not greater than that between the favour he enjoyed before the war and the disgrace into which he fell after it. At the Congress of Paris, however, he did Russia good service as second plenipotentiary. In a former chapter I mentioned that the Treaty of Paris was far more advantageous to the vanquished than to the victor; and if this result was partly to be ascribed to the second Russian plenipotentiary, it was owing to the talent which made his fortune at St Petersburg—a

remarkable ability in drawing up clever despatches. France wished to be considerate to Russia, and Brunnow's suggestions were listened to with favour. At the London Conference, too, he owed his exceptional position to the talent above referred to.

He was, next to the Danes themselves, the most ardent champion of the cause of Denmark, and therefore my most decided opponent. This was chiefly caused by the circumstance that he had not only signed the London Protocol of 1852, but had been its chief originator. He was, moreover, personally inclined to make himself agreeable at Court. When I was Ambassador in London he gave a remarkable proof of this, by concealing the death of his wife for three days, in order that the funeral, which he succeeded in postponing by keeping the body in ice, should not cast a gloom over the reception in London of the Duchess of Edinburgh. Had he during the Conference been as thoroughly acquainted with the views of the Queen as I was, his behaviour would have been different. But he only thought of the rising sun of Marlborough House. He was, above all things, a consummate master of diplomatic reserve, although he was fond of easy and unrestrained conversation. I will give two examples of this. When the news of the betrothal of the Duke of Edinburgh to the Grand Duchess Marie was becoming generally known, I asked him if I could report it as a fact. 'For you, my dear colleague,' was his answer, 'I have no secrets ; but in family affairs my principle is silence.' His successor, Count Schouvaloff, when on his way to London, visited him at Darmstadt,

whither he had retired, and said to him: 'We are old friends, and I appeal to your experience. You know all about England; Lord Derby is in power: pray tell me what sort of a man he is?' 'Lord Derby,' was the answer, 'has two hundred thousand a year.' 'Indeed?' said Schouvaloff; 'I am glad for his sake, but that does not interest me so much as to know how best to deal with him.' 'Well, with your acuteness, you will surely know how to deal with a man who has two hundred thousand a year.' 'More than that,' added Schouvaloff, when relating that conversation to me, 'I could not get out of him.'

CHAPTER XXV

1864

THE LONDON CONFERENCE.

If it was something novel and strange for the German Confederation to send a representative to a European Conference, the position of that representative towards the other members of the Conference was equally so. He was both more restricted and more free than his colleagues; restricted by the rigidity of his instructions, free by the indemnity which he was assured beforehand for any infringement of them. I made full use of this privilege; knowing the views of the majority at Frankfort, I spoke and acted not only as the representative of the Federal Assembly, but also as that of the public opinion of Germany. In fact, Frankfort ratified every step I took on my own responsibility; and I believe I should not have been disowned had I demanded a portion of Jutland as well as Schleswig.

My instructions were as follows—

1st. To act on the basis of the Federal Constitution and the decisions of the Confederation, acknowledging the rights and maintaining the interests of the German Confederation and the Duchies of Holstein, Lauenburg and Schleswig, and especially demanding the greatest possible independence for the latter Duchy.

2nd. To prevent as much as possible, after a previous understanding with the Austrian and Prussian plenipotentiaries, any disagreement on important subjects between the German representatives at the Conference.

I obeyed the first instruction by demanding and obtaining the greatest possible independence for Schleswig, in the form of absolute separation. The second instruction I always kept in view; but it was much more difficult to follow, as the disagreement between the representatives of the two great German Powers was not less evident than that between them and me.

My credentials make a magnificent ornament for my study, where they are to be seen in a splendid frame. They are as follows: 'The Sovereign Princes and the Free Towns of Germany, in consequence of the acceptance by the Confederation of the invitation issued by the Government of Great Britain and Ireland to take part in the Conference meeting in London for the purpose of restoring peace to the North of Europe, have appointed as their plenipotentiary the Royal Saxon Minister of State, Baron von Beust.'

History, which in these days is so often superficial, has been biassed and therefore unjust to the London Conference. That Conference was described as useless and barren of results, but only after Alsen had been taken and the Peace of Vienna had been ratified; and yet the only place where this description could have been used with justice was Copenhagen, and perhaps St Petersburg. As for London and Paris, the English Government was very angry at the result of the Conference, while the French was very eager for a solution more satisfactory to Napoleon than to Germany; but both were really satisfied at having got out of the complication. Nothing but the greatest ignorance and ingratitude could have prompted the statement made in Germany that the Conference had been unsuccessful. It could not have resulted more favourably for Germany than it did. Those who formed that hasty judgment, forgot above all that if the Conference could have come to a unanimous decision, such a decision, considering the notorious views of the neutral Powers, could only have been taken at the cost of the rights and claims of Germany. That this was avoided was a distinct advantage, though it was not very difficult to do so, as the protest of the German representatives would have been sufficient for the purpose. But more was attained by the virtual abolition of the much-talked of London Protocol of 1852, thereby putting an end to possible negotiation between Denmark and the Duchies, and at the same time to any danger of European intervention in the war. I can maintain without self-praise that this

result was chiefly to be ascribed to me. I mentioned above that the disagreement, which had been feared and foreseen in my instructions, was as evident between the representatives of the two German Powers as that between them and me. This was very natural, considering the antagonistic tendencies of Vienna and Berlin. It might perhaps have been said of Prince Bismarck and Count Rechberg that they were 'two hearts and one pulse,' but not that they were 'two minds and one thought.' Vienna desired to maintain the London Protocol, Berlin wished to get rid of it. As Count Apponyi had, out of regard for his Prussian colleague, to limit his attitude as representative of Austria to one of passive observation, so Count Bernstorff owed it to his Austrian colleague not to act without a certain degree of reserve. This alone could explain that when I came forward with the declaration, made at my own risk and responsibility, that the German Confederation would never consent to the Duchies being again placed under the dominion of Denmark, Count Apponyi exclaimed almost in a fright: 'Mais je ne sais pas si M. le Plénipotentiaire de la Confédération est autorisé à dire cela'—to which I replied: 'Je n'ai pas, en effet, une autorisation spéciale, mais je suis certain de ne pas être désavoué.' 'Eh bien,' said Lord Clarendon, 'j'aime mieux cela, au moins c'est clair, et un acte de bonne foi.'

From that moment it became obvious that there was no need to disguise one's opinions, and accordingly Austria, Prussia and the Confederation declared to the Conference that they recognised Duke Frederick as the lawful successor to the throne of the

Duchies. That this could have been done without a protest from the neutral Powers, was the most brilliant result of the Conference. Unfortunately, the opportunity was not turned to account, which is a matter to be lamented by all who would have wished to avoid the fratricidal war of 1866.

Immediately after we had issued that declaration, I went to Count Apponyi, and implored him to represent at Vienna the necessity of bringing about at once a Federal decision to the effect that Duke Frederick should be acknowledged and placed in possession by the Confederation. However unwelcome this step would have been to Prussia, she could not have prevented it if it were taken while the enthusiasm with which the declaration was received in Germany was still at its height. I did not overlook the fact that the Duchies could not be surrendered to Duke Frederick until after the conclusion of peace; but that which had been done could not after so solemn a manifestation be sufficient. The Federal Assembly was in possession of Pfordten's report, recommending the recognition of Duke Frederick, and that recommendation had only to be carried out. The Duke once invested with power, it would have been of little consequence in what position he might be compelled to stand towards Prussia; the essential thing was that there would have been no double dominion, no Treaty of Gastein, and no Austro-Prussian War.

In spite of all difficulties, the Conference was on the way to an understanding in the second part of its deliberations. After the neutral Powers, that is

France and England, whose non-intervention was of the highest importance, had, either explicitly or tacitly, reconciled themselves to the separation of the Duchies, England was anxious to preserve the integrity of Denmark to some extent by a settlement of the frontier, while France laid more stress on a *plébiscite*. The rectification of the frontier was treated rather as a partition. Denmark was called upon to give up North Schleswig as far as the Schlei (Sweden proposed even the Eider), with securities against the erection of fortifications. Count Bernstorff was decidedly in favour of a moderate concession; and as he did not hesitate to maintain this opinion in Berlin, we may gather how little he trusted the attitude of England, after having been for so many years Ambassador in London. I did not oppose his views; but I took the liberty of advising my two co-plenipotentiaries not to enter on a diplomatic negotiation on this question, as this would only bring twofold odium on those concerned in it. The neutral Powers would accuse them of harsh inflexibility, while the German people would condemn them for being unnecessarily conciliatory. The only way of justifying the concession would have been to represent it as leaving to Denmark a population that was proved not to be German, and to have no desire of becoming so. To do this the only means was a *plébiscite*, which I considered very practicable, if it were arranged by zones of several miles in extent, and if the votes were taken from North to South, the line being drawn where the majority ceased to vote for Denmark. The district that would have had to be

surrendered would have been very small. But on this subject I had reckoned without my host. Vienna became wildly excited on hearing my plan. The Government wrote to Count Apponyi to ask whether I had lost my head, and whether I had forgotten the Venetian Provinces. The Austrian plenipotentiaries declared themselves in the Conference against a *plébiscite*, while Count Bernstorff was in favour of it. Austria, in her indignation, overlooked the fact that what was to take place in Schleswig was precisely the reverse of what had occurred in Italy. There the people were asked if they would rather have a new than their old master, and as the former was already in possession, the question was decided without difficulty. Here the people were to be asked if they would prefer to stay with their old master—a question which certainly had no revolutionary character.

The Conference closed after some very animated debates, as a Black Forest clock sometimes stops suddenly after ticking more loudly than usual.

On leaving London I had one more recollection that might serve as an instance of that mutability of human things which is so strikingly evident in the present age. The day before my departure there was a ball at Strawberry Hill. Lord Clarendon said to me on leaving: 'Eh bien, je ne vous en veux pas, vous ne pouviez faire autrement; mais je ne veux plus jamais rien avoir à faire avec cet homme sans foi ni loi qui s'appelle M. de Bismarck, ni avec celui qui est son nègre, M. de Rechberg.' Two years later, when I was Austrian Minister, and Count Apponyi was in

Vienna, I begged of him, when occasion offered, to remind Lord Clarendon of that saying. Count Apponyi wrote that Lord Clarendon did not remember it; but it is possible that he himself did not remember to deliver my message.

I will only say a few words in justification of my two visits to Paris, which were considered great crimes, especially in Vienna. The first took place at Whitsuntide, when the Conference did not sit. The interviews that I had with the Emperor Napoleon and M. Drouyn de Lhuys exercised decided influence on the instructions of the French Ambassador in London. That I returned to Germany viâ Paris was caused by accidental circumstances, quite remote from politics. My stay in Paris would not have delayed my arrival at Frankfort by one hour, had I not received, on arriving at the Saxon Ambassador's, an invitation to go to Fontainebleau. This delayed my return by one day. At Fontainebleau I had not only the opportunity of seeing the Emperor and Drouyn de Lhuys, but also the Austrian and Prussian Ambassadors, Prince Metternich and Count Goltz; and at the moment when war had just broken out again, it must have been of interest to both to be informed by an eye-witness as to what was being done in London. But having gone twice to Paris, I was naturally accused of a leaning towards France.

CHAPTER XXVI

1864–1865

PEACE BETWEEN GERMANY AND DENMARK.—THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FEDERAL TROOPS. — CONTRADICTORY POLICY OF THE GREAT POWERS.—THE TREATY OF GASTEIN AND MY VISIT TO VIENNA.—AN HISTORICAL DESPATCH.

It was the perfidy of fate, such as sometimes shows itself in the life of an individual as in that of a nation, that decreed that Germany, who had done most for the liberation of the Duchies, and whose representative had been sent by her Confederation to defend their cause at a European Conference, should be the first victim of their liberation when it was accomplished. 'Infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem,' I could exclaim with Æneas when I think of the proceedings at Rendsburg. I will make my reminiscences of the close of that ever memorable year 1864 as concise as possible, which is always advisable when one subsides from an active to a passive part.

When the London Conference was over, hostilities were immediately resumed, without the German Powers being under the necessity of paying the slightest regard to the neutral Powers—a result which had been brought about by the Conference, as may be seen from the preceding chapters. The fate of Denmark was soon settled by her submission. An armistice and peace followed each other in rapid succession.

Austria and Prussia neither desired to undertake a war of conquest nor to make Denmark suffer for what she had done to them. The little kingdom was invaded in order to compel it to yield to the just demands of the German Confederation. To use a legal phrase, the Powers did not act as the mandatories of the Confederation, but as its 'negotiorum gestores.' The Confederation, which had taken part in the London Conference, and was still occupying Holstein by virtue of the decision of the two Powers, had not only legally, but also logically the right to have a voice in the conclusion of peace; especially as after the German Powers had proclaimed the separation of the Duchies from Denmark under the rule of the Duke of Augustenburg, and had taken part in the sanction of that measure by the Confederation, they could not appropriate the ceded territory for their own benefit, which according to their own statement belonged, not to him who ceded it, but to another. None of the German Governments ignored the respect due to the Confederation in the negotiations on that subject;* and there was therefore

* Some votes, indeed, especially those of Saxony and Bavaria, called forth angry despatches from Berlin to Dresden and Munich.

the less reason to forget the respect due by Austria and Prussia to the Confederation and its members, above all to those whose Governments had taken up a military position in Holstein by order of the Confederation. The very reverse, however, happened. Austria, indeed, was passive, but Prussia was perniciously active. It could not have been overlooked by Prussia, where military discipline and order was the first consideration, that the Saxon General commanding at Rendsburg was bound to obey the orders of the Confederation, and those orders alone. If this was not overlooked, it was not considered worth notice, otherwise the King of Prussia could not have commanded Prince Frederick Charles to make himself master of Rendsburg and to occupy it with six thousand men, for such were the terms of the notice sent by the Prince to the commander of the Federal troops. The conflicts between the Prussian and Hanoverian and Saxon troops, which were much exaggerated, and were mainly caused by the incessant provocations to which the Federal troops were exposed, constituted a very weak motive for so improper a proceeding. I do not blame General von Hake for not having used force; but I am certain that if he had done so, he could not have been made responsible. It could not fail to be agreeable to the Saxon Government that the Federal Assembly approved the course he had taken, and that an exculpatory statement was at the same time made by Prussia.

But it may be easily understood that extreme bitterness rankled in millions of hearts, and that

collisions were unavoidable. This state of things induced the Saxon Government, after the Confederation had ordered the withdrawal of the Saxon troops, not to bring them home direct through Prussian territory, but by rail through Hanover, Hesse, and Bavaria. My biographer, Dr Ebeling, who thinks it necessary to counterbalance his praises by an occasional sharp reprimand, says that I regretted having taken that measure. Why should I have regretted it, as scarcely anybody blamed me for it? Certain papers may have pretended to see in it a studied insult offered to Prussia; but the Government of Berlin was far from looking upon it in that light, especially as it had urged Dresden to expedite the return of the troops. The Saxon Government ran the risk of not being indemnified for the additional expenses incurred by the circuitous route taken by the troops; but it must be acknowledged that no difficulties were raised in any quarter, and that much would have been at stake had they passed through Prussian territory. Both Governments had full control over the conduct of the military, but not over that of other individuals, the result of whose provocations might have been incalculable.

If, as I have mentioned above, the conduct of the two Powers was full of contradictions before the Peace of Vienna, it was still more so after that event. These contradictions served the schemes of Prussia very effectually; to Austria they were disastrous. Without them, the one would have gained nothing, the other lost nothing. They were *ignes fatui* which Prussia herself had lighted.

Among the unpleasantnesses that occurred, we must include the difficulty of deciding, after a country had been acquired by conquest, who was the rightful master of that country. That Duke Frederick of Augustenburg had been proclaimed as such to Germany and to Europe, did not prevent Austria and Prussia from treating his claim as an open question, and trying to decide it by legal advice. This course was always connected by Austria with a recognition of the priority of the Augustenburg claim; but it was opposed by other Federal Governments, who regarded the recognition of Duke Frederick as irrevocable. Among these we may name Bavaria, Saxony, and the Grand Duchy of Hesse. Hanover had always been hostile to the Augustenburg claims. The view taken by the above Governments was in accordance with the legal aspect of the question, as well as with the dignity of the Confederation—certainly much more so than the view which ultimately prevailed. Austria and Prussia asserted that the declaration at the London Conference was a mere proposal, and had been designated as such in the protocols. These were drawn up under the immediate supervision of the Russian Ambassador, and were far from being unobjectionable, but independently of this consideration the word 'proposition' is used in French diplomatic language in a sense totally different from the ordinary one: it does not mean 'proposal,' but 'declaration.' It could not possibly have been the intention to submit the question of succession to a German State to the decision of a European Conference. In a compromise there is

generally a provision for the satisfaction of all parties. With the exception of France, where the four names of the Pretender were the subject of many jokes—'May his reign be as long as his name!' exclaimed a French paper—all the parties negotiating with Germany had strong objections to the Duke of Augustenburg. The most important point was the wording of the declaration made at the London Conference, which stated that 'the hereditary Prince of Augustenburg had not only the strongest right to the succession in the opinion of Germany, but his claims were certain to be recognised by the Federal Assembly, and would unite the suffrages of the immense majority of the population of the Duchies.' I mentioned above that Austria allowed a certain priority to the Augustenburg claims. This was partly due to the Augustenburg agent at Vienna, von Wydenbrugk, formerly Minister of Weimar, a man as clever as he was amiable, whom I had occasion to see very frequently at Vienna during the days of exile in 1866. I will not decide whether the Duke of Coburg, who was a friend and relative of Count Mensdorff, had a share in influencing Austria's views. But it is certain that Vienna was more inclined to embrace the opinions of the Central States than those of Prussia. It was a misfortune—not because the Duchies became a Prussian Province, but because nothing was done in Vienna to avert the war of 1866—that the opinion prevalent in that capital (which was indeed sound from an Austrian point of view, as Austria could only lose money and be involved in political complications if she had possessions in the

North of Germany) was not expressed at the very beginning, instead of gaining ground gradually, and only exercising full influence when Austria had still more bound herself to Prussia, and when the movement in the Duchies in favour of annexation was becoming general. If the Imperial Cabinet had come forward immediately after the Peace of Vienna with a suitable manifestation, Bismarck's intrigues would have been impeded if not baffled. I have no intention to censure Austria for not having taken so bold a step; but I am convinced that she might thereby have secured many objects at once. Public opinion in Germany might have been propitiated for a long time, the Confederation—the value of which for Austria might have been measured by the aversion in which it was held by Prussia—might have been renovated and revived, and Prussia might at the same time have been reconciled. This could have been easily done by making the Duke of Augustenburg a prisoner, and promising to assist him only on the condition of his yielding to Prussia's demands. Considering the course events have taken, the Prince and his friends could scarcely say that such a step would have been outrageous; and the consideration would have gained ground that it is easier for an unformed State to make concessions than for one already in existence. Austria would thus have commanded the situation, and she would have had no interest in preventing Kiel and the military and civil authority beyond the Elbe from falling into the power of Prussia. Instead of this, the hereditary Prince showed himself intractable during the negotiations at

Berlin because he reckoned on Austrian support. What followed, belongs to irrevocable history.

Another opportunity offered itself which might have been advantageous to Austria. It was the last time I offered good but unheeded advice. According to my annual custom I went to Gastein in 1865, and stayed a few days at Vienna on my way home. I was received by the Emperor, had frequent interviews with Count Mensdorff, and dined in his villa at Weidlingen with him, Count Bloome, and Count Maurice Esterhazy. I left a memorandum with Count Mensdorff in which I developed my ideas. I proceeded from the consideration that Austria was placed, in consequence of her co-possession and occupation of the Duchies, in a dilemma peculiarly likely to result in warlike complications. I presumed that she was as desirous of avoiding war with Prussia as she was of obtaining an honourable solution. I put the question whether this state of things involved any specific Austrian interest, and I answered it in the negative. Acknowledging that Austria had only fought and conquered in the interests of Germany, I came to the conclusion that it would be advisable for her to apply to the official representative of Germany, the Federal Assembly, and to demand a decision on the question whether the German Confederation wished her to remain in the Duchies or not. If the answer were in the negative, Austria would withdraw her troops with unsullied honour: if in the affirmative, she would command the majority of the Federal Assembly; and, in case of a conflict, she would be able to insist on their material aid.

I think this opinion does not betray a secret desire on my part to provoke war. As far as I could gather from our conversations, Count Mensdorff seemed to like the idea. It may have been less acceptable to Count Bloome and Count Esterhazy, and it had already been decided to send the former to Gastein.

When I became Austrian Minister a year later, I enquired in vain for that memorandum. It had never been placed before the Emperor.

When I arrived at Gastein, the Convention to which that watering-place gave its name had already been concluded. Count Bismarck said to me: 'We have made a less combustible arrangement with Austria.' The arrangement turned out, as usual, to be utterly unworkable. When two partners have two estates or factories and quarrel over the management, the best way to preserve peace is to divide the property between them. But if they continue to manage the business in common, things become worse than before, each party not only maintaining his own opinion, but going his own way. Of course Austria found herself in the wrong when new and unavoidable conflicts arose. When she availed herself of her undoubted right of convoking the Provincial Diet of Holstein, this was a betrayal of Prussia; but when deputations of the Holstein nobility were sent to Berlin to ask for annexation, this was no betrayal of Austria!

It is easy to understand that amidst these manœuvres of the Great Powers the German Confederation was becoming more and more exposed to a process of dissolution; but it is less easy to under-

stand, and therefore the more to be appreciated, that Austria's appeal to the Confederation in 1866 was not made in vain. And yet even at the present time Austrian papers constantly talk of 'the wretched times of the Bundestag.' I consider that it redounds to the praise of Bavaria, Saxony, and the Grand Duchy of Hesse that they held up the standard of the Confederation even in the most unpropitious times; and that, seeing their motion for the instalment of the hereditary Prince of Augustenburg rejected—although it was fully warranted by the course of events—they withdrew from the conflict with the following declaration:

'The Governments of Bavaria, of the Kingdom of Saxony, and of the Grand Duchy of Hesse will not enter into a detailed account of the action of the Governments of Austria and Prussia since the 6th of April. They consider it would be idle to recall to mind that steps have been taken which tend more and more to bring the national question of Schleswig-Holstein to a definite conclusion, without allowing the Prince, who is the lawful heir, the Duchies themselves, or the Confederation, to state their views. If, as would appear to be the case, the majority of the Federal Assembly is inclined to regard this conduct, if not with approval, at least with silence, the three Governments are bound to respect its decision, however they may regret it; and it is not in their power to induce the Confederation to assume a different attitude. But they think that they owe it to themselves, after having exhausted all the means afforded them by the Federal Constitution, to declare that so

long as the Confederation has no prospect of coming to a decision in this matter on the principle of legal rights, they consider their task and action on this subject in the Federal Assembly as at an end, and that henceforth they will limit themselves to an emphatic and decided protest against any arrangement not based on the above principle.'

CHAPTER XXVII

1866

THE LAST SIX MONTHS OF THE GERMAN CONFEDERATION.

The reader who bears in mind the events narrated in the preceding chapters, and who realises the treatment undergone by the Confederation, not from the people, but from their rulers, will find it difficult at the present time to believe that its end was an event surprising to the majority of its contemporaries; and yet, however people may shut their eyes to the fact, it was so to all except the few who had been working for its dissolution.

The well-known Deputy Braun-Wiesbaden, who never knew me personally, but who often did me the honour of writing about me, related in a feuilleton of the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*, to which I shall refer later on, that Prince Wittgenstein, the Minister President of Nassau, had said with regard to my reform project of 1861: 'How is it possible to reconstruct

the Bund? To cut the hump off a hunchback would be a fatal operation.' This idea looks as if it emanated from my old friend Wittgenstein, whose presence always put the members of a Ministerial Conference of the Central States in a good humour; but the simile might have been used in another sense. Hunchbacks are not of a pleasing exterior, nor was the Confederation. But as a rule they are not incapable—rather the reverse; and the Confederation might have done good work had its enemies allowed it to do so. If, however, nothing else is done with a hunchback than to make him the butt of ridicule and the victim of ill-treatment, he is certainly not likely to play a brilliant part. In spite of adversity, the Confederation showed remarkable tenacity; and it may be asserted with full conviction that it would have been even more tenacious if the blows which were aimed at it had proceeded from a stronger Power.

The tenacity of the Confederation was, indeed, so strong, that the end could only be brought about by an open rupture of all Federal bonds. It is useless to examine the question as to who was in the right in 1866—Austria, who proposed, in consequence of Prussia's arbitrary measures in Holstein, the mobilisation of the Federal forces; the Central States, which assented to this motion; or Prussia, who professed to see in that assent a violation of the Federal Constitution. A Federal rupture had undoubtedly taken place long before by the alliance of Prussia and Italy, an alliance concluded for a mutual war against a member of the Confederation. That act

was in direct opposition to the fundamental laws of the Confederation, and the sole example of its kind during the fifty years of the existence of that body.

In view of the above considerations, the events that occurred during the first half of 1866 lose much of their interest. They were, more or less, logical results of those of 1865—especially of the circumstance that Austria returned to the Confederation and the Augustenburg cause only after she had acted to their prejudice jointly with Prussia, and had made the Gastein Treaty entirely for the benefit of that Power. That treaty gave Austria an indefinite and precarious position, and Prussia the opening for a definite and permanent conquest.

Austria, as I have said, returned to the Confederation, and that body knew how to forget the past; but the logical consequences of actions are not to be averted by subsequent repentance. Three years previously, Austria said: 'In a Federal matter I cannot prevent the Confederation from rejecting my motions, and I cannot force it to join me; but nothing prevents me from allying myself to Prussia as a European Power, and doing what the Confederation refuses to do.' Now Prussia said: 'I am on the point of quarrelling with Austria, and probably of deciding the quarrel by force of arms. Federal law forbids any member of the Confederation to go to war apart from the other members; but nothing prevents me from acting in the capacity of a European Power, of seeking allies, and of treating as enemies those countries of the Confederation that do not join me or do not guarantee strict

neutrality.' That Prussia in this case went farther than Austria, does not alter the principle. The most essential difference between the position assumed in Europe by Austria in 1863, and by Prussia in 1866, was that Prussia thereby forwarded her own interests, while Austria went directly in opposition to hers.

When the conflict was imminent, the much-abused German Central States, who laboured under the aversion not only of the Berlin press, but also of that of Vienna, assumed an attitude free from presumption, from party-spirit, from hatred to Prussia, and especially from pusillanimity. Their policy accurately represented the Federal point of view, and also the cause of peace in the most unmistakable manner; for it may be affirmed with full certainty that, although not one of the German Governments desired war, some of them did not perceive the necessity of supporting the Central States by united military preparations. The fact that in this respect Saxony did not shirk her task, but placed herself in a position to appear on the decisive day with a complete and fully equipped army, made her suffer severely from the wrath of her mighty neighbour, but also secured for her an honourable page in history.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1866

RETROSPECT ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF A NEW ERA.

Before I give my reminiscences of the events immediately preceding the war, I do not think it superfluous to review in a last historical retrospect the state of things which now came to a close—the Confederation, and, which was closely connected with it, the independence of the various German States.

I daresay that many of my readers, even those who are most favourable to me, may have asked, when perusing the preceding chapters, how it was possible that I should have regretted the end of a creation unsympathetic to the people and condemned and undermined by their Governments; whether, in spite of my emigration to Austria, I continue a German; and whether as such I should not rejoice at the transformation which gave birth to a powerful and united Empire.

In more than one passage of this work I have already stated that I appreciate as much as anybody the greatness of that Empire. As an Austrian it is not for me to put questions and to decide them as to the future of united Germany ; and the excellent footing on which Austria and Germany now stand is so far from being unwelcome to me, that it was I who first laid the foundation of it. Nor can anyone suppose that personal considerations may have biassed my views and judgment ; for the year 1866, without which there would have been no Franco-German War and no German Empire, opened for me the path to unexpected honours and brilliant, though transient days of celebrity which would never have dawned for me had the Confederation survived and flourished. But I should be totally impervious to truth did I not see that, independently of all political rivalry between the two most powerful sovereigns of Germany, the final solution of the German question in the form it has assumed, could not have been that of Austria's choice, chiefly because it had a deep and pernicious influence on her internal affairs. It is remarkable that those populations of Austria who suffered most from it, were the very people who consoled themselves the soonest—I mean her German inhabitants.

If I leave the Austrian for the German point of view, I must say that in the life of nations as in private life, it does not become a man who has suddenly acquired wealth or power to be ashamed of his past or to ignore what was good or meritorious in it.

Was the German Confederation in reality so objectionable? It is a fact that during the fifty years of its existence, external peace was undisturbed, and Germany was not involved in a single war. It is said—and I myself said so in my last speech at the Delegation of 1871—that this happy result was owing to the long understanding between Austria and Prussia. Undoubtedly. But this understanding was created and facilitated by the Confederation as the connecting link. So long as that understanding lasted, no German Government had any other programme than complete union with those united Powers. Only when Prussia began after 1848 to pursue the policy of gradually expelling Austria from Germany, did it become inevitable that some Governments should side with Prussia, others with Austria. But we must not forget that not one of the German Governments of that time ever took a single step that might have warranted foreign countries in interfering in German affairs. If there were times when excessive deference was shown to Russia, and later on perhaps to France, we must look for the reason elsewhere than in Frankfort. For years the German Courts were trained by Vienna and Berlin in the fear of God and of the Czar Nicholas, and they did not give the first example of subservience to Napoleon III. But when the moment came for the German Confederate Princes to defend themselves and their country, as in 1840 and 1859, they rose nobly and patriotically as one man. And I must add this consideration, which is often overlooked in the present day: It is highly satisfactory and desirable to be always hearing of the

German Empire and its Allies for the preservation of peace. But the more welcome the result of these efforts, the more essential is their necessity. This is a logical and irrefragable conclusion. In the days of the German Confederation we heard little of such efforts, because peace was regarded as a matter of course—which it has ceased to be since 1866 and 1870.

The severe judgment passed on the Confederation was extended to the system of Federal Union, and the restrictions on the independence of the Federal States. But can it be forgotten that the representative system did not owe its origin and development to the two great Powers, in whose dominions it was only introduced after having flourished for twenty or thirty years in the German Central States, in spite of the opposition of Vienna and Berlin? Can it be maintained that this system, which has long been identified with progress in Germany, as in France and Italy, only acquired full development and respect in the German Empire? There are still many who advocate the imposition of limits to popular representation; but not one of them will assert that the time will not come when the representative system will be wanted, not as a curb for the higher, but as a safety-valve for the lower classes. These times are sure to come, and a grave responsibility will fall on those who are now using their power to bring that system into discredit.

Not only in this sphere of political organisation, but also in legislation and administration, it was the smaller and not the great States that took the lead and did much that was beneficial. I will instance the construction of railways. The Nürnberg-Fürth line was

the first short railway in Germany, and the Leipzig-Dresden, afterwards continued to Magdeburg, was the first long one. I was Secretary of Legation at Berlin when the Committee of the Leipzig-Dresden railway was formed. How many times did I hear sneering remarks on 'the Saxon wiseacres!' The Minister of Foreign Affairs, who became later on my uncle by marriage, confidentially warned me not to have anything to do with this undertaking. And need I remind my readers how powerfully arts and sciences were promoted by the multiplicity of the German cities where Kings held their Court? It may be retorted that there is nothing to prevent the Minor States from continuing to pursue this beneficial course. But I must point out that there is more than one of the most important branches of legislation and administration in which they are no longer able to have a decisive voice. There is further a lack—from what causes I need not state—of that spirit of mutual emulation among the independent sovereigns which was so powerful in promoting many undertakings.

Faithful to the principle of describing things as they were, and not as people imagined them to be, I have perhaps been too sincere in this part of my memoirs. Truth has benefitted, but I must protest against any insinuation that I may have had the bold thought of depreciating the present by my description of the past. I never presumed to apply to myself the verse of Lucan:

'Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.'

Had I done so, I should have withdrawn into sulky retirement. The Germans cannot have discovered any

such tendency in my demeanour at Vienna, Paris, and London. As I said in a former passage, the events of 1866 and 1870 may be compared to volcanic eruptions. Where the fragments fall, there they lie, and it would be folly to wish to replace them in their former positions. Independently of this obvious consideration, I am not unaware of the fact that the German States adopted with sincerity and self-sacrifice the new order of things. This applies especially to my native country, where the King himself gives the example of true and uncontested loyalty to the empire. It is a slander to say that Saxony is hostile to the empire. No one is hostile to the empire, although the same cannot be said of Imperial legislation, and the very painful consequences of the law of naturalisation may have made many sigh for the good old times.

In the vast German empire there is one man who will, I am convinced, appreciate my ideas, because his acts are in accordance with them. That man is Prince Bismarck. Would he, who only obeys his own thoughts, assert so strongly the rights of the various German States represented in the Federal Council, even to the detriment of the German Parliament, if he had not learnt to appreciate their value at the very time when one would never have expected from his Frankfort reports that he should find in them the most lasting materials for the edifice he has constructed?

CHAPTER XXIX

1866

THE PRECURSORS OF THE WAR.

In Biedermann's work, 'Thirty years of German History,' which has been already quoted, it is stated at p. 455, Vol. II: 'Nothing could prevent Herr von Beust from driving the country to war, or Herr von der Pfordten from yielding to the pressure thus put upon him;' and in a note he adds that 'Herr von der Pfordten confessed this to Herr von Friesen,' alluding to the Memoirs of the latter. It is remarkable that the author of 'Thirty Years of German History' founds his assertion on an authority the credibility of which he himself had questioned, and which he accused in a later book of distorting history in the most flagrant manner. It would be strange if Herr von der Pfordten had really made such a confession, for his language in the Bavarian Chamber was far more warlike than mine in the Saxon Chamber, and,

as *chef de file* of the Central States, he urged the wavering Saxon Government to adopt the Austrian proposal of mobilisation. Under all the circumstances, however, the statement attributed to him may perhaps have been considered natural, nay pardonable. In those days, when Pfordten and Friesen were negotiating at Berlin, their object was to save at the last moment as much as possible. I had been dismissed and was politically no more—by which I do not mean to say that it would have been justifiable to cast one's faults on the shoulders of a defenceless man; but I would recommend leniency towards those who were fulfilling a most arduous task under such difficulties as then surrounded the envoys of the vanquished Powers. But I shall revert to Bavaria later on.

I know well that that assertion of the author of 'Thirty Years of German History' does not stand alone. But I have chosen it because it expresses in the strongest words what others veil in guarded terms. The accusation that Saxony wished for war, is founded on her military preparations.

What I said above, I repeat; not one of the German Governments wished for war. Austria did not wish it. The Emperor William assured me at Gastein in 1871 that he only decided on war after severe struggles and with a heavy heart; but I needed not this assurance to be convinced of the fact. I leave the question as to whether the same could be said of his Ministry for others to answer. Prince Bismarck certainly cannot be accused of having taken up the idea of war as a sudden

inspiration. I was assured by one of his Petersburg colleagues that when he was Ambassador in the Russian capital, shortly before he entered the Ministry, he spoke of war with Austria as part of his programme. But I do not attach excessive weight to this or to any other oral tradition. Written statements, however, cannot be repudiated, and we often see in his Frankfort reports not only the probability, but the certainty of this war maintained and proved.

As to the military preparations, I mentioned in a former chapter of this work in speaking of the Austria of Metternich, that her traditional policy was one of contradictions. It was the same in 1866 : the war came both too early and too late.

At the beginning of June, a fortnight before the declaration of war, General Baron Ringelstein, who was stationed at Teplitz, was sent on a secret mission to Dresden. He was commissioned to induce Saxony to march her army into Bohemia. I have never been able to find out what gave rise to this step. It was certainly not prompted by suspicion. It is possible that Austria remembered the beginning of the seven years' war, and the lawless occupation of Saxony by Frederick the Great, of which the Saxon army became the victim. But what she did not consider was that the Federal point of view would have again been abandoned had the Cabinet of Dresden yielded, and Prussia would thus have obtained a welcome weapon. Of course, the Cabinet of Dresden did not yield. It was, however, a pleasure to me to make the acquaintance of Baron

Ringelstein. Some weeks later I met that amiable and accomplished officer at Teplitz, where he took charge of my horses just in time to save them from the enemy; and we only saw each other again quite recently, as during the period that I was Minister at Vienna he occupied a remote post. We talked of former times, and he said: 'I have never forgotten your words to me in Dresden!' 'What words?' I asked. 'You said: "Let them box your ears three times rather than declare war before you are ready!"'

Armaments require not only money, but time, especially if lost time has to be made up. Everything depended on gaining time, and an excellent opportunity for so doing was offered by the Congress proposed by Napoleon III. Austria declined that Congress, or, which amounted to the same thing, accepted it with such restrictions that it never came to pass. She stipulated that no arrangement should be discussed which would give one or more of the States represented at the Congress an extension of territory or of power. She was thinking of the Venetian provinces when she made this condition. The despatch sent from Vienna to Paris, London, and St Petersburg, is to be found in the 'Calendar of European History' edited by Schultes. It is impossible to find a more honest or dignified document; but neither honesty nor dignity would have been jeopardized had Austria waited to produce her stipulations until the Congress was assembled. As the despatch in question admits, the terms of the invitation were not such as to warrant the interpretation that a cession of territory would be demanded.

It might have been called dishonest (although politics have their own standard of morality), had Austria, by making overtures to Italy, raised hopes which she had no intention of gratifying; but here there was no question of rejecting a probable demand, and no rule of honesty could forbid diplomacy from using its option to accept or to avoid a negotiation without undertaking special responsibilities. How thoroughly this is understood by the great master of modern policy can be testified by Count Benedetti. It has been said that Count Mensdorff, who only accepted his appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs—a post that he neither solicited nor desired—from a feeling of military obedience, thought with his usual modesty that he was not equal to the task of taking the lead in a European Congress. In another part of my Memoirs, I do full justice to the eminent and insufficiently appreciated qualities of Count Mensdorff; I may therefore be allowed to say that he should not have regulated his conduct according to the dictates of military obedience, but that having accepted his post, he should have also taken the Presidency of the Congress. One thing, however, seems to have been forgotten in this matter. The Prusso-Italian Treaty was no longer a secret, and its result could only be that Prussia had a decided interest in preventing an understanding at the Congress between Austria and Italy. Under these circumstances there was no danger of any insidious demands being made to Austria.

Next to armaments, an essential portion of preparations for war consists in a thorough sympathy

and union between the allied forces, and this was lacking in the case of Austria's most important ally. It is not easy for me to speak of the conduct of Bavaria in 1866. I have experienced much happiness in that country, I was always fond of it, and I remember it with affection. My difficulty is enhanced by the necessity of mentioning a man with whom I had close business relations for many years, and whose high qualities I fully appreciated. I am therefore convinced that my judgment will be dispassionate and impartial. During the Conference of the Central States that was held at Augsburg in April, I noticed that strong sympathy with Prussia was expressed in the language of the Bavarian Minister; and the impression it made upon me was so vivid that I thought for a moment of going to Vienna, instead of returning to Dresden, in order to ask Count Mensdorff seriously whether Austria would not do better to come to an agreement with Prussia, even at a sacrifice. Nevertheless I thought it well to submit this question to my Royal Master, and his opinion led me to relinquish my idea. But I was amazed when I heard from Pfordten at the next Conference, held at Bamberg, a repetition of the language he had used before 1850.* It was in accordance with this apparent change of policy that although General von der Tann was sent to Vienna before the war began, to arrange for a junction of the Bavarian with the Austrian Army in Bohemia, no such step took place. Bavaria did not wish to deprive herself of her troops, and thus

* Biedermann says in his historical work already quoted, that Pfordten expressed himself at the Bamberg Conference very disparagingly as to Austria's military position. This could not have been during the sitting of the Conference.

the common cause was ruined, for the Bavarians would have formed the left flank at Königgrätz, and it was just through the weakness of the left flank that Austria lost the battle.

It was unavoidable that such contradictory behaviour should have called forth the bitterest criticism, giving rise to the suspicion that Bavaria was following her own selfish interests; but I am fully convinced that although Pfordten deserved many reproaches, he did not deserve that of duplicity or secret treachery. His whole soul was torn by conflicting emotions. I soon got the better of the surprise of Olmütz. But Pfordten never forgot that 80,000 men were then placed by Bavaria at Austria's disposal, merely to be informed in the most contemptuous tones that they were not wanted. Few know as I do how thoroughly his hand was paralyzed in 1866 by the recollection of 1850. He was, moreover, a strong adherent of the cause of the Duke of Augustenburg, and was highly displeased at Austria's conduct towards that Prince. And he was further tempted by ebullitions of Bavarian patriotism and chauvinism. He even hinted something about re-acquiring the district of the Inn. Thus my judgment, even at that time, pronounced him guilty of vacillation, but not of intentional breach of faith.

CHAPTER XXX

1866

DECLARATION OF WAR, AND COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES.

As a further refutation of the reproach that I had 'driven the Powers to war,' I may allege the attitude of the Saxon Government against Austria's proposal for the mobilisation of all the Federal Corps d'Armée excepting the Prussian—a proposal the acceptance of which is well-known to have resulted in the separation of Prussia from the Federal Assembly, and the declaration of war. Dresden warned Vienna, and only decided on assenting to the motion after Bavaria had done so; an instructive commentary on the assertion, mentioned in the preceding chapter, that Pfordten pointed me out to Berlin as the instigator of war.

Saxony certainly did not deserve this reproach. To the very last moment the Cabinet of Dresden entertained the hope of a peaceful compromise—a

fact proved by my passing the two nights previous to my departure for Bohemia in arranging my papers and in burning some of them. But we were far from giving way to a carelessness that would have been criminal under the circumstances. On the contrary, all preparations were made for the possible commencement of hostilities, with a precision which I am the more ready to praise as I had but a small share in it. The Ministers of War and Finance, Rabenhorst and Friesen, deserve the chief credit. The Saxon troops, consisting of 30,000 men and 75 guns, were ready the day after the die was cast at Frankfort, and three days later they were prepared to enter Bohemia. Care had been taken that a portion of the gold and valuables, as well as the inestimable treasures of the Green Vaults of Dresden, should be packed up and sent to Munich, under the care of an official of high rank and proved honesty, Geheimrath Baron von Weissenbach. The day after the decision given at Frankfort, a special train conveyed these treasures viâ Prague to Munich, where the Bavarian Government prepared a fire-proof vault for their reception.

On a former occasion I had the opportunity of declaring emphatically that Saxony did not conclude a Special Treaty with Austria in 1866 any more than she did in 1850, and that she only fought by the side of Austria in fulfilment of her Federal duties. Friesen stated this officially in the Saxon Chambers after the conclusion of peace. Many people were of opinion that under such circumstances it would have been more constitutional and appropriate if the Saxons had joined the Bavarian troops. The issue of the

military negotiations between Austria and Bavaria is a sufficient justification of the measures of the Saxon Government; but if the arrangement made with General von der Tann had been carried out, Saxony would have undertaken the task of protecting the feebly-defended northern portion of Bavaria, thereby enabling the Bavarian Army to take part in an action that might have resulted in a victory, and relinquishing all claim to the support of Austria during the negotiations for peace.

The union of the Saxon with the Austrian Army gives me the opportunity of refuting an error which I have repeatedly noticed. I have heard the opinion expressed in Austrian military circles, that the great mistake of the war was that an advance was not made at the right moment to prevent the junction of the forces of the Crown Prince with those of Prince Frederick Charles; and that this was not done because the King did not wish his country to be used as a battlefield. Now there was certainly never a monarch more parentally solicitous for the welfare of his people than King John, but his kind heart would not have yielded to such a weakness. He never said anything of the kind, as is proved by the following letter from Baron Werner, then the Austrian envoy at Dresden :—

DRESDEN, *8th May* 1866.

I have the satisfaction of being able to announce to your Excellency that, in consequence of our conversation of yesterday, I am authorised to give you the emphatic declaration that if Prussian troops occupy Saxony, Austria is ready to send, at the

request of the Saxon Government, Austrian troops into that country, and that Austria will consider the occupation of Saxony by Prussia as a Federal rupture, that is, as a 'casus belli.' I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) WERNER.

If all necessary preparations were made for those who were to leave the country, the same may be said with equal justice of what was to remain. After it had been decided that the King was to cross the Saxon frontier with me and with the Minister of War, his Majesty appointed for the period of his absence an Interim Government bearing the title of 'Landes-Commission,' and consisting of the three remaining Ministers, von Falkenstein, von Friesen and Dr Schneider, to whom was added General von Engel. This Government at once entered on its duties. It had to endure stormy days and bitter trials; the more, therefore, does it deserve unbounded applause for its zealous and prudent fulfilment of the arduous duties entrusted to it.

Events now took their natural course. The first step taken for the execution of what had long been planned was the Prussian Note, the pith of which was as follows:

'The Royal Prussian Government can only see in the Saxon vote a direct act of hostility against Prussia as well as a violation of the Federal Compact; and the geographical position of the kingdom of Saxony makes it impossible for Prussia to overlook the hostile attitude assumed by the Royal Saxon Government.'

Saxony was then requested to place her troops on

a peace-footing, and to assent to the convocation of a German Parliament by Prussia. Prussia stated that she would in that case on her side guarantee the sovereign rights and the territory of Saxony in accordance with the Prussian proposals of reform, that is, subject to the supremacy of Prussia. Should this offer be rejected, Saxony would be treated as an enemy.

The answer was demanded and sent on the same day; it was to the following effect:

'The Fundamental Laws of the Confederation exclude the possibility of its dissolution. The Confederation acts within its competency when deciding on the partial or total mobilisation of its forces; and as unanimity is not requisite for a decision on this subject, the decision of the majority is under the Constitution valid. Consequently, the Royal Saxon Government could not yield to the first of the Prussian demands without being faithless to its Federal duty. With regard to the second, the Saxon Government is willing to give all possible assistance to the convocation of a German Parliament; but it will do this, in conformity with the request of the Saxon Chambers, in the sense of the election of a Parliament for all Germany; and it maintains that the writs for the election should not be issued by any single Government. If, under these circumstances, the Government of his Majesty the King of Prussia should really find a reason in the rejection of the proposed alliance for considering the kingdom of Saxony as in a state of war with Prussia, and should act accordingly, the Saxon Government could

only protest strongly and emphatically against such a measure, appealing to the Confederation for help, by virtue of the Fundamental laws of that body.'

The Prussian envoy left Dresden, and the Prussian troops entered Saxony; but in consequence of the orders suspending all railway traffic, and the destruction of the bridge over the Elbe near Riesa, they could only advance slowly, while the Saxon troops were approaching Bohemia. On Wednesday, the 14th of June, the decision of Saxony was announced at Frankfort; on Saturday, the Queen, the Crown Princess, and Princess George went with their children in a steamer to Aussig. The Royal Princes were of course with the army. The Queen Dowager Marie remained behind, and it is owing to her energetic intervention that many parks and gardens were spared during the perfectly superfluous construction of fortifications.* Princess Amélie, whose dramatic works are well-known, also remained at Dresden. In the afternoon the King left the capital for Giesenstein, near the frontier on the Teplitz Road, where I arrived in the evening.

I remember two occurrences of that day, which were very characteristic of the King.

His Majesty had set forth several hours previously on horseback, accompanied by the Minister of War and some officers of high rank. I would gladly have joined the cavalcade, but my six horses, which I

* At that moment Prussia was very imperfectly acquainted with the strength and the movements of the Austrian Army. It happened one day that a general alarm was raised by the Prussian troops at Dresden because a patrol of Hungarian Hussars had advanced during a reconnoitring expedition as far as Freiburg, some distance from the frontier.

would not sacrifice, had already been sent on to Prague, and the Master of the Horse could not place one at my disposal. The party halted before the Palace of the Grosse Garten, and I drove up in a carriage. Messages arrived from which it appeared that they had started too early, and they all returned to the town. Soon afterwards I proceeded to the Royal Palace, and found the King, not a prey to his own thoughts, as might have been supposed under the circumstances, but perusing a pile of documents with as much attention and composure as he would have shown in times of the profoundest peace.

I passed the night at Geisenstein, where I received many messages from Dresden, so that I only retired to rest very late. Early in the morning I was awakened by an order from the King to proceed to his room. He said to me: 'I have slept very little, and have been thinking of the state of affairs. I hope we shall be victorious, and then it might be thought we could get back our old country.* But I do not wish it. It would revive and perpetuate old animosities, only giving us disaffected subjects in return.'

In reply I assured his Majesty that I had never reckoned on such a question arising when diplomacy should take up the matter that was now being decided by the sword; but that, if circumstances should bring it about, I must reserve the right of discussing it from several points of view. I thought to myself that some time would elapse before it became necessary to get up early on this account.

These two occurrences are characteristic. The

* The districts of which Saxony was deprived by Frederick the Great.

one shows us a calm and easy conscience; the other, the constant desire of keeping it unsullied by any reproach, and the total absence of any ambitious design exceeding the bounds of strictest duty.

The King remained on the frontier some days longer, in order to be present when his army was crossing it; but I was sent on to Prague, where several of my officials were waiting for me, and where I was received most heartily by the commanding officer, Count Clam-Gallas. The house where he and his beautiful and amiable wife dispensed their hospitality belongs to my most pleasing recollections. Some days later I returned to Teplitz, and thence I accompanied the King to Prague, where he met with an enthusiastic reception.

I have treated these events with minuteness because I wished to dispel the idea that the invasion of the Prussians caused a panic.

The news I received from Dresden gave accounts of the conduct of the Prussians which were very unpleasant to me and very discreditable to them. My colleague Friesen, who has never been accused of hostility to Prussia, alludes to these incidents in his Memoirs, a book far from friendly to me, in the following terms:* 'These events caused the more excitement because their singularity stamped them

* I gladly add to this passage the following from the same work: 'The attitude of the public of all classes towards the Prussians was dignified and quiet, but reserved. The concerts which usually take place at Dresden in the summer in public places were suspended; and the public resorts, excepting those frequented by the lowest classes, were deserted. The ladies of the upper and middle classes were seldom visible in the streets, and then only in deep mourning. There was no intercourse between the native population and the Prussian officers and soldiers.'

I do not quote these words from hostility to Prussia, but only because they prove how unfounded was the reproach that the policy of the Government was not in unison with the feelings of the people.

with the character of petty and personal revenge.' I do not hesitate to dwell on this subject, especially as my rectification of details may induce the reader to form a less harsh judgment.

I begin with the excesses that were committed in my villa at Laubegast, but must first mention an occurrence relating to them. My wife, who has plenty of courage, and who gave proofs of it during the May insurrection, remained in the villa with her sons, who were still very young. Although I believed they would be less molested there than in the town, I did not omit before my departure to telegraph to Paris to request the diplomatic protection of France for my family. My wish was gratified in the most courteous manner, and not only was the French envoy at Dresden informed of it, but the French envoy at Berlin, Benedetti, also received orders to take the necessary steps with the Prussian Government. Before these preliminaries were completed, however, the French envoy at Dresden, Baron Forth Rouen, who had held this post for eleven years, and who was and continued to be my sincere friend, had urgently requested my wife to leave her country house, and he himself escorted her to Dresden, where she took up her abode with the children and their tutor, not in my official residence, but in one of the large hotels. Some days later Baron Rouen conveyed my family safely across the frontier.

On the day when my family left the villa, the unpleasant episode took place to which I have already alluded. Most of the servants remained in the villa,

which looked on one side towards the Elbe and on the other towards the Pillnitz road. Perhaps nothing would have happened if the entrance facing the road had been locked. But a man-servant whose curiosity led him to stand at the open door looking at the troops marching by, was asked to whom the villa belonged, and he unfortunately gave my name. The consequence was that the troops at once broke in, and extraordinary outrages were committed. That all my wine was consumed was not unpardonable. The same cannot be said of the brutal ill-treatment and outrages to which my servants, men and women, were subjected. Nor is there an excuse for the forcing of the locks and the wanton destruction of the furniture. Insurgents entered my house in 1849, but on my return I found everything uninjured with the exception of a *portière* which had been torn.

I must not omit to point out, however, that this was of course not done under instructions from the Prussian Government.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE HOPEFUL DAYS OF PRAGUE AND THE SORROWFUL DAYS OF VIENNA —THE WAR ENDS AND MY CAREER AT DRESDEN WITH IT.

During my stay at Prague I should certainly not have believed that the same Dr Herbst who headed a deputation to me of the professors of the University would be my colleague two years later; that I myself would take my seat in the Bohemian Diet within a twelvemonth; and that I would afterwards take the oath of allegiance as an Austrian Minister in the Hradschin. All this was far from my thoughts, for we indulged in dreams of the victorious entry of the Austrians and Saxons into Dresden. The true report of the victory at Custozza was followed by others which were false, but which were readily believed. Everybody was elated, and the Pilsener beer was so excellent!

The whole of the diplomatic corps of Dresden assembled at Prague, with the exception of the English Minister, who had been recalled, and whose successor

had not yet arrived. I had the means of corresponding with Dresden through trusty messengers, and I was thus spared the trial that weighed so heavily upon me during the six following weeks in Vienna: enforced idleness, with an office of responsibility and many cares. My time at Prague was greatly taken up by my representations to the Bavarian Government, supported by letters from the King to Prince Charles of Bavaria, urging the advisability of a Bavarian expedition to Bohemia. If these representations had been listened to, the issue of the battle of Königgrätz would have been very different, for it was lost through the weakness of the left Austrian flank. The proceedings of the Bavarian Government in this matter are explained in the previous chapter.

The happy days of Prague were of short duration. Only too soon did we receive information as to the position and the movements of the Austrian and Prussian forces which appeared ominous to the military authorities. The King again joined his troops, and would have been present at the first engagement, had not Marshal Benedek dissuaded him from doing so. I received orders to proceed to Pardubitz, from which place, railway communication being totally suspended, the journey to Vienna had to be continued in carriages drawn by the King's horses. I was in the same carriage with his Majesty and the two Adjutants-General, von Witzleben and von Thielau. The road was so thronged with ambulances and other military conveyances that we were compelled to drive at a very slow pace

almost all the time. 'If we are being pursued, the Hussars will soon overtake us,' said the King in a jesting tone, but with a mien that showed how fully he realised the gravity of our position. Early in the morning we arrived at Deutsch-Brod, and in the evening at Iglau, where we passed the night, and where I was thankful to the Burgomaster for his hospitality. The next day was the day of Königgrätz. We arrived in the afternoon at Brünn, where I saw for the first time Dr Giskra, the Burgomaster, who was afterwards Minister. The news from the battlefield was not yet decisive; and we continued our journey to Vienna by rail, not without hope. At 2 A.M. we arrived in the Austrian capital. The station was brilliantly lighted and lavishly decorated with flowers; and we perceived the Emperor on the platform in full military attire, but with a face as white as his uniform. He greeted the King with the appalling news of the lost battle.

As stated before in these Memoirs, I originally began them with the period of five years during which I was Minister at Vienna, and the first chapter I devoted to the period between Königgrätz and my retirement from the Saxon Ministry. This period of seven weeks deserved a minute description in the history of my Austrian career, as, although there was then no idea of my entering the Austrian service, I was frequently called in to exercise my influence on Austrian affairs. I was particularly concerned in the cession of the Venetian Provinces to the Emperor Napoleon, and in the mission to

Paris, which was intrusted to me by the Emperor with the King's sanction.

The day of Nikolsburg was not a surprise. I was summoned one morning to the Emperor. I found Count Mensdorff and Count Esterhazy with him. He told me he was determined to conclude peace, but that he would continue the war if the King of Saxony desired it. I had discussed everything repeatedly with the King, and was able to reply without hesitation: 'If your Majesty were to declare your resolution to continue the war unless the King desired peace, my Master would say that he was prepared to fight to the last extremity. But to insist on war when your Majesty is peacefully inclined, would be too great a responsibility for the King to assume.' The Emperor then enquired as to the conditions to which the King would accede; I answered: 'The integrity of Saxony and her admission as a member of the South German Confederation.' I received the promise that both conditions should be fulfilled.

I then repaired with the two Ministers to the Imperial Chancellerie, where instructions for the Austrian Plenipotentiaries were drawn up in accordance with the Emperor's decision.

It is essential that I should here insert the letter in which I offered my resignation as well as the King's answer.* Both letters were made public at the time.

* I must mention that my entrance into the service of the Emperor of Austria was not in the remotest degree connected with my retirement from that of the King of Saxony. It was not until the beginning of September that I was informed at Gastein of my nomination.

VIENNA, 15*th August* 1866.

SIRE,—Your Majesty deigned to agree to my proposal that I should take part in the impending negotiations for peace at Berlin. I received this favour with special gratitude, as I demanded it in order to remove all doubts as to my readiness to bear the weight of the momentous duties imposed upon me by the present position of affairs, and as to my desire to place the actions of your Majesty's Government in the truest light and to give the negotiations a firmer foundation by refuting many false suppositions. But the Cabinet of Berlin has refused to consent to my participation in the negotiations.

As your Majesty will remember, I submitted, on the day the preliminaries of peace were signed by Austria and Prussia, the question to your Majesty whether I might not be a hindrance to the agreement that it is now advisable to make with the Royal Prussian Government.

The refusal of Prussia confirms me in the opinion that that hindrance should be removed, and I consider it my duty to your Majesty and the country to place my resignation at your Majesty's feet, however deeply it may pain me to withdraw under present circumstances from your Majesty's service.

Thus a ministerial career, extending over more than seventeen years, comes to an end. Its commencement, like its close, was marked by a vital crisis of our public affairs.

I feel myself free from the reproach of having been the cause of such crisis in either case: I am only conscious of having done my duty, and defended lawful rights in accordance with the principles and feelings of my Master and King.

I beg your Majesty to continue to me your

royal favour, and to believe my assurance that I shall ever bear in mind the great happiness I felt in devoting my powers to the Fatherland under your Majesty's direction, and that I shall ever be anxious to show myself worthy of the countless evidences of confidence and indulgence which I have received from your Majesty. I have the honour to be, Sire, with the profoundest respect, your Majesty's most humble and obedient subject

FD. FREIHERR VON BEUST.

The King's answer was as follows:

SCHÖNBRUNN, 16*th August* 1866.

MY DEAR MINISTER OF STATE, FREIHERR VON BEUST,—Last night I received your letter, in which you ask to be allowed to resign the functions you have hitherto exercised. I recognise in the motives that induce you to take this step, the same faithful devotion to your sovereign and Fatherland that you have displayed throughout your official career.

I need not tell you how painful it is to me to entertain the thought of our separation. You stood by me, ever since my accession, in prosperity and in adversity, giving me daily opportunity of becoming acquainted with your brilliant gifts as a statesman, your unwearied industry, and your unshakeable loyalty. Your advice was always conscientious and well-considered; it was prompted solely by your insight into affairs, and not by your likes or dislikes, and has proved by the experience of many years to be beneficial. We soon agreed on the most important subjects, and as I was convinced that you took no important steps without my knowledge, I could rely on your implicit obedience to my orders even when you differed from my views.

If I nevertheless agree to your request, it is in consideration of the political reasons you allege. Those reasons demand the sacrifice of my personal wishes and sentiments to the welfare of my country. I therefore consent to your resignation, with the assurance that my gratitude for the important services you have rendered to me and my late brother, and my sentiments of sincere friendship and esteem, will ever be the same towards you in spite of the change of circumstances.

With true esteem and sincere affection, I remain, Dear Minister of State, Freiherr von Beust, Yours most devotedly, JOHN.

Another letter from the King, which was sent to me the next day, was not made public. I preserved it carefully as a precious souvenir. It is a complete refutation of the assertion that the published letter was only the result of an urgent request made by me for some sign of favour, and I therefore insert it here.

SCHÖNBRUNN, 17th *August* 1866.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—I hope you will not let yourself be prevented from coming to see me whenever you like. Things have not come to such a pass that I cannot see you as long as you remain here, if it is only convenient to you. Yours most devotedly,

JOHN.

I went to take some rest at Gastein, then almost deserted, and I was accompanied by the last Saxon envoy to the Confederation, Geheimrath von Boss. He had served under me for many years; he was a man of great merit, and I had a sincere friendship for him. It was by a last delicate attention of the King's

that he was commissioned to bear me company on entering upon a condition of solitude and isolation to which I was not accustomed. My brother, then 'Oberberghauptmann' in Saxony, was led to Gastein by the same sympathetic feeling. But my exit from the stage was not to be of long duration.

CHAPTER XXXII

1866

MY NOMINATION AS AN AUSTRIAN MINISTER.—RECAPITULATION OF EVENTS AT VIENNA.—MY PARIS MISSION.—THE PRELIMINARIES OF NIKOLSBURG.—THE FORGETFULNESS OF EXILE.

Perhaps in my whole life there never was a moment when I experienced greater surprise than on receiving my nomination to the Austrian service. This nomination was in truth especially remarkable in view of the circumstances by which it was attended. For some time previously, rumours had reached me that such an appointment was probable, but I never believed them, and I can say in all sincerity that I never indulged in thoughts of so great a change of fortune. I was thoroughly devoted to my native land and to its dynasty. I can boldly challenge any one to bring forward a single word of mine, written or spoken, to prove that I had any other ambition than that of faithfully serving my country and my King; and this ambition was only strengthened by

my once hearing the King say to one of my friends: 'I should like, if possible, to lend him to someone for a year.' I felt myself happy in the considerate and flattering confidence of that admirable sovereign. My thoughts and desires were fully satisfied by the part assigned to me in the affairs of the German Confederation; and though I liked to receive compliments like that of the Emperor Napoleon: 'c'est un aigle en cage,' they did not ruffle the repose of my mind.

My nomination to the service of Austria had been under consideration long before it actually took place. I know that the idea was suggested at Vienna, shortly after the sudden death of Prince Schwarzenberg, by Count Nesselrode, the Russian Chancellor, who was very intimate with me, and who frequently made lengthy stays at Dresden, his daughter being married to the Saxon Ambassador, Baron Seebach. Although the suggestion was made at a time when Vienna and St Petersburg were on the most friendly terms, it had an effect totally different from that which Nesselrode wished to produce. It aroused, as I was credibly informed, suspicion rather than favour.

I do not carry my modesty so far as to deny that my appointment would have been far more useful before 1866 than after that date, especially as regards German affairs. I am sure that I would have succeeded in preserving Austria's dominant position, and making disasters like those of 1866 impossible. Even my political enemies cannot deny that I enjoyed the highest consideration among the

German Central States, for they constantly vilified me as the instigator of the Federal policy. That which really diminished my influence in those States, and fettered my actions, was the very natural jealousy with which I was viewed as a Saxon Minister. As an Austrian Minister, I would not have laboured under that disadvantage. I would have been able to secure for Austria the third group in the Federal Assembly in a compact phalanx; but, wiser than my predecessors, I would have made Austria uphold and respect that group, thus saving it from the painful experience of frequently making sacrifices for Austria, and then being surprised by the tidings of an agreement between that power and Prussia. Although I would have been in a position to secure for Austria a far from contemptible ally in Germany, it would be a great mistake to suppose that I would have proved a hindrance to an understanding with Prussia. I had, indeed, during my Dresden tenure of office, been repeatedly in disfavour at Berlin; but strange to relate, I had also been several times a *persona gratissima* in the Prussian capital, especially during the Crimean War, and afterwards when the second crisis of the Zollverein was brought about by the Franco-Prussian Treaty of Commerce. Whoever would take the trouble of reading the Prussian newspapers of all shades of the years 1854, 1855, and 1862, would find proofs in abundance of that assertion. But even at Berlin the jealousy I have above referred to was not wanting. What was considered arrogance and unwarrantable assumption of authority in the Saxon Minister, would have been

regarded as natural and justifiable in an Austrian Minister. It should further be borne in mind that I would have had to deal with the predecessors of Bismarck, the overweening ambition of the latter not yet entering into the sphere of actual politics. And with regard to the Iron Chancellor himself, I will only remind the reader that he wrote to me a few days after his accession to power in 1862, holding out hopes of a possible agreement.

It is certain that I was often mentioned with favour at Vienna. In the years 1849 and 1850, Prince Felix Schwarzenberg called me 'his best lieutenant.' I was one of the foremost champions of Austria during the Italian War; and the Federal fidelity of Saxony naturally led her to sympathise with Austria, who was desirous of upholding the Confederation. But it must not be forgotten that I never sacrificed the independence of my Government, and that I never hesitated to oppose the Austrian Government when necessary with the same firmness as the Prussian. I did this, as already mentioned, during the Crimean War, and during the crisis of the Zollverein in 1862. My projected reform of the Confederation, which I produced in 1861, and in which for the first time it was proposed that Austria should alternately assume with Prussia the presidency of the Federal Assembly, was more bitterly criticised at Vienna than at Berlin. And finally, in the Schleswig-Holstein question, I opposed both Governments simultaneously. It seems to me that these transactions are sufficient evidence that my conduct betrayed no hope or desire of entering the service of Austria.

After this retrospect, I must return to the explanation of the cause of my extreme astonishment at my nomination when it really came to pass. For this purpose I must go back several months in my narrative.

The result of the battles in Bohemia, so disastrous for Saxony and Austria, led me to Vienna by the side of the King. Early in the morning an Imperial Aide-de-camp appeared with orders that I should appear at Schönbrunn at 9 o'clock to be present at a conference. I found there Count Maurice Esterhazy, with the Emperor and the King. Count Mensdorff had been sent by his Majesty to the army.

The subject of the Conference was the question of the cession of the Venetian Provinces to France, which was agreed to. This decision was attacked both at the time and afterwards, especially in Court circles. I never concealed the fact that I voted in favour of it, not knowing what I afterwards discovered, that the cession had been contemplated even before the war in case Austria should prove victorious. The measure was indicated by the situation, and it was of decided use. It became imperative owing to the necessity of sending the Southern Army to Bohemia, and to the hope that France would offer her assistance in return. The former object could not have been attained by a direct cession, as Italy was bound by her Treaty with Prussia to continue the war in spite of it, which it would be difficult to do after the Venetian Provinces became French territory; the second object also

was attained. I have never been able to understand why this transaction should have been considered an outrageous one, nor why the Italians should have been so indignant. It has never happened in history that a defeated enemy has acquired territory, but the cession to France had a precedent in that of Lombardy, with this difference, that the present cession was not made to the victor, and that the defeated enemy derived all the benefit from it. That this act, as I have already said, was not without use so far as the expected assistance of France went, was, indeed, owing to an accident. After the Conference I returned to Vienna, and went a few hours later to the Chancellerie, where I heard, to my great amazement, that the telegram conveying the Emperor's decision had not yet been sent to Paris. It was not despatched until late in the afternoon. This delay was attended with the most beneficial results. Prince Metternich received the telegram at 9 P.M., and took it at once to the Tuileries. Napoleon was delighted at the news, and gave orders for its appearance in the *Moniteur*. On the following day Prince Napoleon, Lavalette and Rouher came and protested before the Emperor against the acceptance of an offer which would offend Italy and burthen France with an obligation towards Austria. It was too late, for the *Moniteur* had already announced the acceptance of Austria's offer. If the telegram had been sent at once it would have arrived at Paris in the course of the morning, and the protests of Prince Napoleon and his friends would undoubtedly have been effectual.

But Napoleon III could not avoid the moral obligation which was dreaded by the opponents of the proposal. I was in a position to urge this obligation upon him, as I shall show later on; and it has been proved that the intervention of Benedetti contributed powerfully towards the acceptance of the conditions of peace, which were, all things considered, moderate for Austria. The Emperor William said to me at Gastein in 1871: 'I have been most generous to Austria; I did not wish to be involved in a war with France.'

During the following week I held no further communication with the Ballplatz; and I was only once summoned to the Hofburg in company with the King, when the news was received of the sudden dispersion of the Bundestag. On the 9th of July, very late at night, Count Maurice Esterhazy entered my room, and told me that the Emperor wished to speak to me, and that there was a question of my being sent to Paris in order to induce the Emperor Napoleon to intervene more forcibly on behalf of Austria. Though not prepared for this mission, I was not surprised at it. It was known in Vienna that I had been occasionally in personal communication with the Emperor of the French, and that he had always accorded me a sympathetic reception. I did not fail to perceive that the mission had little prospect of success, and that it would debar me for ever from returning to my post at Dresden. These considerations could not make me draw back, and I determined to fulfil the mission with which I was entrusted. Perhaps I might be successful at least in obtaining

something for poor Saxony,— which I actually did.

Count Esterhazy conducted me to the Emperor, and it was on that occasion that I became acquainted with the corridors of the Burg, having hitherto only passed up the grand staircase opposite the chief entrance. I did not hesitate to declare that I was ready to undertake the mission if the King would allow me to do so, though I did not conceal my doubts as to the prospect of success. I received neither written nor oral instructions. Everything was left to my discretion, and the Emperor gave me an autograph letter as my credentials.

How often have I read in the National Liberal papers expressions like the following: 'Beust went to see his friend Napoleon.' 'Beust was amusing himself in Paris.' In a feuilleton of the *Neue Freie Presse* Herr Braun-Wiesbaden wrote some years later that I 'was a great fool to scamper off to Paris.'

I said nothing; but now that I am writing history, I may be allowed—not for my own sake, but for that of the cause I served—to recall that Imperial autograph, which I preserve as a precious heirloom.

The next evening I left for Paris, and the Emperor Napoleon received me a few hours after my arrival. I had conferred previously with Prince Metternich and Count Seebach, the Saxon Ambassador, and had been informed by them that it was too late. Prince Reuss, who was then the Prussian envoy at Munich, but had previously been accredited to the Court of the Tuileries, where he was very much liked,

had been sent to Paris on a secret mission, leaving at the very moment of my arrival. Had I been sent the day after Königgrätz, I might have been more successful.

I had but little hope from the first, and even less when I saw the Emperor and heard him speak. It was a great misfortune for Austria that he was at that moment suffering intense pain from an internal complaint, which greatly impaired both his physical and his intellectual powers. A year later I saw him at Salzburg as vigorous, both bodily and mentally, as ever. But in 1866 he did nothing but mutter 'Je ne suis pas prêt à la guerre.' I endeavoured in vain to instil into him a more enterprising spirit. 'Sire,' I said, 'je ne demande pas que vous fassiez la guerre, je suis malgré tout assez bon Allemand pour ne pas même le désirer, mais il ne s'agit pas de cela. Vous avez cent milles hommes à Châlons, dirigez-les sur la frontière, faites partir une escadre pour la mer du Nord, c'est tout ce qu'il faut. La ligne d'opération de l'armée prussienne est déjà trop étendue pour que celle-ci ne soit pas obligée de faire halte ; à Vienne, à Munic, à Stuttgart on reprend courage, et l'Allemagne vous accepte avec reconnaissance comme médiateur. Si vous ne faites pas cela, vous aurez peut-être vous-même la guerre avec la Prusse dans cinq ou six ans, et alors je vous promets que toute l'Allemagne marchera avec elle.'

I also had an interview with Drouyn de Lhuys. Although more in favour of Austria than of Prussia, he advised the immediate conclusion of peace, and when I addressed the above words to him, he rode the

high horse and rejoined : 'Si on nous attaque, nous, nous saurons bien nous défendre.'

Later on, when I was Ambassador in Paris, Drouyn de Lhuys spoke to me in great detail about the events of 1866, and laid stress on the fact that by his advice energetic steps had been decided upon, but were frustrated by other influences. Count d'Harcourt says the same in his book about Drouyn de Lhuys. I do not contradict either ; but I cannot forget that in those critical times Drouyn de Lhuys was the representative of the policy which was adopted and not of that which was rejected.

Nevertheless I succeeded in two points. For Austria, I obtained from the Emperor Napoleon the acknowledgment of his moral obligation to take her part in the approaching negotiations for peace, in consideration of the cession of the Venetian Provinces. In this I was most loyally supported by Count Walewski, then President of the Corps Législatif, a relative of the Emperor and my friend.* For Saxony I obtained the promise that France would insist upon the maintenance of the integrity of her territory. I may say that at that time I saved Saxony from utter annihilation : for, however favourably Austria may have been disposed towards her, it may well be doubted whether Austria could have persisted in her support of Saxony

* During the debates of the delegations in 1870-1, Giskra stated that Bismarck, when Brünn was occupied in 1866, had sent for him, who was then the Burgomaster of Brünn, and had requested him to inform the Vienna Cabinet that Prussia was ready to conclude peace at Brünn, provided it were done at once and before France intervened : and that the conditions of peace then imposed were moderate, as no war indemnity was demanded, and South Germany was to be left under the supremacy of Austria. I have already stated why I refrained from contradicting this statement at the time. It was perfectly groundless, and can only have originated in a misunderstanding. The French mediation, far from being injurious, was of signal advantage to Austria.

had France not been there to back her. I saw the two leaders of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the day of the Nikolsburg Convention, and I was thoroughly acquainted with what was going on behind the scenes ; and I know that the case was as I have stated it.*

After staying a few days in Paris, I sent a report to Count Mensdorff. On my return to Vienna, I found everyone in better spirits. The Archduke Albrecht had arrived with the Southern Army: all spoke of energetic resistance and a continuation of the war. I was invited to a State dinner at Schönbrunn in honour of the King of Hanover, who had just taken refuge in the Austrian capital. The Emperor spoke kindly and gratefully of my Paris mission. I shall always say that I never experienced the 'gratitude of the House of Austria,' from him, but only at times from

* My Mission to Paris reminds me of a memorable negotiation with Baron James Rothschild. The Saxon Government had taken care that all the portable treasures of the palace should be sent to Munich, where a fire-proof vault in one of the state-buildings was placed at our disposal. As General Rabenhorst deserves the credit of having got the army ready for war, so the Minister of Finance, von Friesen, deserves that of having removed these treasures at the right moment. Several days before the Prussians entered the town, they were conveyed viâ Prague to Munich. They consisted of part of the contents of the Grüne Gewölbe, State papers, and cash. There was no fear of their being stolen, as they were in the custody of the Geheim-rath von Weissenbach, whose long services to the State were a guarantee of his integrity ; but when the skirmishes in the North of Bavaria ended so unfortunately, there was reason to fear that the Prussians would advance as far as Munich, and I found myself responsible for a property worth more than 40,000,000 thalers. My first thought was how to remove the gold, which was packed up in casks. I hit upon the idea of investing it with the Rothschilds' of Paris. They offered two per cent. interest. These terms were, under the circumstances, acceptable. When everything seemed settled, old Baron James looked at me with his weak eyes, and said: 'Pray tell me: are not the Prussians in Dresden?' 'Of course they are,' I answered: 'or I should not be here.' 'In that case,' said Baron James, 'I shall give up the money if the Prussians ask for it.' 'You would certainly not lose by that transaction,' I replied, 'but I cannot agree to leave the money with you on those terms.' I then entered into communication with the Swiss envoy in Paris, who obtained the consent of the Canton of Zurich to take charge of the treasure if necessary ; and I telegraphed to Munich that a special train should be held in readiness the moment the Prussians crossed the Danube. But the truce soon made this measure superfluous.

his well-beloved subjects. Count Mensdorff and Count Esterhazy ignored my mission altogether; I did not receive from the Ministry either thanks or payment towards the expenses of my journey. I gave myself the pleasure, when I assumed office in the Ballplatz, of leaving this debt unpaid.

The sanguine hopes of the Austrians were of short duration; the lost battles on Hungarian soil, and the other symptoms that were showing themselves in that country, produced great depression. The spirit of the Viennese population, which had been martial and patriotic even after Königgrätz, gave way to complete discouragement and utter indifference. The peace of Nikolsburg was not a surprise.

I have seldom met a man who presented more psychological contradictions than the late Count Mensdorff. His chivalrous sense of honour and devotion to his Imperial master were well known and valued, as were his excessive modesty and unassuming disposition. Less known, perhaps, was his ability, which was certainly remarkable, but was combined with an absolute incapacity to make his views prevail. In his conversations with me he always showed a strong and acute judgment, subordinated, however, to other considerations which were absolutely inscrutable. It may have been owing to his habits of military discipline that he decided to obey the Emperor's commands, and to accept the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after he had repeatedly stated that he had not the qualities necessary for that post; but this excuse cannot apply to his conduct in the year 1866, when he might probably

have prevented the war had he emphasized his sound views as to the result of the conflict by a decided refusal to remain in the Cabinet. This tendency to sink his individuality was illustrated in an almost ludicrous way during his tenure of office by his acceptance of the co-operation of Count Maurice Esterhazy. On the few occasions when I visited him, I never took my seat to talk about business but the door opened, and little Esterhazy entered, and sat down by the side of the Minister as a music-master seats himself by his pupil. Although Mensdorff severely condemned all the despatches that aggravated the situation and prepared war, he was weak enough to sign them.

Count Maurice Esterhazy was his exact opposite. Count Mensdorff's judgment perceived what was practical and advisable; Count Esterhazy's showed itself in negation. The former could never carry his recommendations, the latter always succeeded in carrying his objections. At the Austrian embassy there was for many years a man of great wit and originality, a native of Ragusa. He described Count Esterhazy admirably by saying that he was a man who passed his life in looking through a microscope at a drop of water, for the purpose of discovering a lot of insects which the Creator never intended us to see. I have good cause to believe that it was owing to him that the advice which I offered as Saxon Minister in 1865, shortly before the Convention of Gastein, and which would, in all likelihood, have preserved Austria from the war of 1866, was rejected.

On the lamentable day of the Nikolsburg Convention these Ministers vied with each other in asserting that they had never wished for the war which had ended so unfortunately. These assertions could not justify either of them, and least of all Count Esterhazy, for his objections, even more than Count Mensdorff's want of firmness, induced Austria to reject the Paris Conference which she had already accepted, and which might in any case have afforded her three weeks more for preparations. I have been assured by those who know, that his secret thought was that a duel between Prussia and Austria was inevitable as a question of honour, and that in the result neither party being a gainer, Germany would be divided between the two, both parties adopting with regard to their new German possessions the internal policy hitherto pursued by Bismarck in Prussia. It was partly owing to this secret thought, which, however, was not kept secret, that Bavaria assumed so lukewarm an attitude on the outbreak of hostilities, thereby causing the disasters which ensued.

The integrity of Saxony was conceded at Nikolsburg; but as soon as the demand for her admittance into the South German Confederation was broached, Bismarck sprang up from his chair, threatening to break off the negotiations. I was prepared for this refusal, and had made the request in order to have something to yield.

I did not, however, as already stated, myself take part in the Conference. When we were assured of Prussia's readiness to negotiate peace, I proposed

to the King that I should be entrusted with the negotiation. In the very improbable event of Berlin not opposing my appointment, I would have been of great use, owing to my accurate knowledge of all the episodes which preceded the war, and to my consequent ability to dispel many regrettable misconstructions of Saxon policy. But my admission was most unlikely, and this afforded a ground to provoke a refusal which would furnish an excellent reason for my resignation and facilitate the King's acceptance of it.

The four weeks that elapsed between the signature of the Nikolsburg Preliminaries and my resignation were the saddest period of my life. The loneliness of exile made itself felt more and more, though I felt it rather for the King's sake than for mine. The Austrians looked upon me as an unwelcome visitor at the 'Römische Kaiser,' and the man whose energetic conduct had been praised to the skies by the Vienna papers, who had even in Prague been hailed as a 'true man,' was now frowned upon as the supposed promoter of the war. No supposition could have been more absurd or mistaken. I had indeed always endeavoured to keep Austria on Federal ground; but my advice had only one drawback: that of never being followed. In vain did I implore Austria to espouse the cause of the Central and Minor States in the question of the Duchies, as their attitude was in accordance with the sentiments of the whole nation; in vain did I implore Count Rechberg, through the agency of Count Apponyi, after the Duke of Augustenburg had

been proclaimed at the London Conference, to complete the transaction by a Federal decision; in vain did I recommend a satisfactory conclusion of the Conference by a plébiscite of the inhabitants of the Duchies;—in vain did I urge Austria to oppose the withdrawal of the Federal troops from Holstein; in vain did I warmly recommend, immediately before war was declared, the acceptance of the Paris Conference;—in vain did I protest against the introduction of the proposal of mobilisation in the Federal Assembly on the 14th of June.

Saxony was the only central State whose armaments were completed; but not with a warlike intention. So much did I hope that war would be averted, that I passed two nights in sorting and burning my papers after the Prussian declaration of war was issued.

But Vienna was glad to have a scapegoat. Such mutability is engrained in human nature, and it was my error not to have borne this truth in mind in the following year of dazzling popularity. But what most deeply wounded me was the total absence of the hospitality due to the friend and confederate. Count Mensdorff quite forgot my presence. Only two days before my departure did I receive an invitation, which I of course refused. I wrote to a friend in Saxony: 'To-morrow I leave Vienna. I will shake the dust off my feet. I will not return there in a hurry.' I did not leave without presenting myself to the Emperor. His Majesty received me graciously, but the audience barely lasted ten minutes.

How great was my surprise, when, a week later, the Kanzleidirektor, Ritter von Braun, entered my room at Gastein one evening with the intelligence that the Emperor offered me the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

CHAPTER XXXIII

1866

INCOGNITO MINISTER AT GASTEIN.—FIRST RECEPTION BY THE EMPEROR AT ISCHL.—LETTER FROM THE KING.—VOYAGE TO SWITZERLAND AND ON THE RHINE.—VISIT AT PRAGUE.—CARDINAL PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG AND COUNT BELCREDI.—THE THREE BROTHERS THUN. — ARRIVAL AT THE BALLPLATZ. — ADDRESS TO THE OFFICIALS.

It would have been an affectation quite foreign to my nature had I hesitated to accept office. Nevertheless it would be a great mistake to suppose that I had no choice left, and that I must have been only too thankful to be raised from such a depth of wretchedness to such a pinnacle of greatness. I was indeed at that moment an exile from my native land, but what a host of incredible transformations had I witnessed! My attachment to my country was sincere and profound; it led to my attachment to the Minor States, for which I have as often been censured; and my ambition might have been gratified at a far less cost had it taken another course.

My enemies have never denied that I was gifted with versatility and talent; I could therefore have found a future at home under very easy conditions, instead of entering unknown spheres, beset with countless difficulties. But here too I was prompted by my feelings. For the time being, my return to Germany only offered me the alternative of defection or conspiracy. I was made for neither.

I therefore gratefully accepted what was offered me. Staatsrath Braun had received instructions to consult my wishes. I had none in particular. When I saw Herr von Braun again, and he told me that the Emperor was in the habit of rising at 5 A.M., and sometimes summoned the Ministers at 7, I expressed one wish only: that his Majesty should never send for me before 9 o'clock, as I went to bed late and did not get up early. The Emperor never forgot to comply with this request.

Thus, not much more than a fortnight after my resignation, I found myself again a Minister. I am telling the truth when I declare that, in spite of a natural feeling of pride and gratification, the loss of the independence I had long wished for, and had at last attained, filled me with regret. That elastic nature which has often been recognised in me soon fitted itself into the new circumstances. I had already entered into relations which would have enabled me to derive advantages from the use of my pen that hitherto had been forbidden to me, and the prospect thus opened out had great charms for me. But I speedily made myself familiar with my new career.

I attached one condition to my acceptance—that my nomination should be kept secret until the negotiations for peace between Prussia and Saxony were concluded; for I knew only too well that the disclosure of the news would injure my native country. I observed the strictest silence on the subject. The Cabinet of Vienna was less prudent; but Prussia so fully believed in my political death and burial, that she never dreamed of my resurrection.

I was still in correspondence with the Saxon envoy at Vienna, Herr von Könneritz, and, by his intervention, indirectly with the King. My constant advice was that his Majesty should return to Saxony under whatever conditions might be imposed, and above all draw nearer to the frontier. This was done soon afterwards, the King removing to Teplitz.

I remained some weeks longer at Gastein, the Austrians taking me for a dismissed Saxon Minister, while I was actually a Minister in their own Government. I felt very much encouraged at repeatedly hearing the wish expressed that I should enter the service of Austria. From Salzburg I received orders from the Emperor to proceed to Ischl; in the latter place I saw him for the first time as my sovereign, but this was still, or should have been, a secret. The Emperor informed me that Count Mensdorff and Count Esterhazy were about to resign, adding that he had the greatest confidence in Count Belcredi and would be very unwilling to part with him. My reply was that I should think it very bold on my part, as a stranger who had yet to make himself acceptable, to demand a *tabula rasa*, and that it was my duty to

make myself acquainted with persons and things before venturing to pronounce an opinion as to any change of office. I only record this very obvious remark because, as I shall mention later on, I was at first treated with more distrust than confidence by Count Belcredi. The Emperor said he hoped I would always express my opinions without reserve, which I cordially promised to do, and I cannot reproach myself with ever having left that promise unfulfilled.

My relations with the Emperor at once became most satisfactory. I was an old acquaintance of his Majesty, and had frequently been in communication with him on former occasions; he had taken a great liking to me, and I had always felt the profoundest esteem for him. I had received the highest Imperial order fourteen years previously from the Emperor's hands, and I therefore took my place beside his Majesty at the next Corpus Christi procession as Doyen of the order of St Stephen. I was, in fact, something more than a knight errant in Austria.

At Ischl I received my first letter of congratulation. It was from the King. He expressed the sincerest pleasure at my nomination, and unbounded reliance in my abilities. He added some excellent advice, concluding with the following words: 'You write very well—I do not allude to your handwriting —but bear in mind that the pricks of a needle often cause more pain and anger than blows.'

I had not asked for that audience at Ischl; it was a solace to me, as it gave me a certain feeling of security, but it could not fail to be made known and

to rouse the attention of the Press. I hastened to leave Ischl, and went first to Switzerland. Had I not been full of anxiety for the fate of my native country, that time would have been one of the happiest of my life. I had sent home my valet, who was entitled to a pension from the Saxon Government, and I was glad to travel about alone with very little luggage. Accepting the invitation of an old and devoted friend, I proceeded to Darmstadt. Perhaps no one except myself has ever been so violently and savagely attacked as Baron Dalwigk; but, as in my case, the attacks on him increased or diminished according to the apparent safety or insecurity of his position; and he was only condemned when his opponents felt sure that he would never return to power. Even his enemies, however, acknowledged his talent for administration. In German policy he espoused my views, and never swerved from them. Had all the German Central States produced men like Dalwigk to support me, Germany would have been organised in a triple union of Austria, Prussia, and the Minor States, and I am firmly convinced that we should then have had not one of the three wars of 1859, 1866, and 1870.

Meanwhile the negotiations between Prussia and Saxony were drawing to a close. I went to Munich and then to Prague, to which town I was summoned by an Imperial order. The Emperor was making a progress through Bohemia, accompanied by the Minister of State, Count Belcredi. I reached Prague before his Majesty arrived, and went for several days to Count Chotek's country seat at Grosspriesen,

near the Saxon frontier, in order to have a meeting with my family. I was warned by the authorities not to go too near the frontier, as a Prussian patrol might cross it (of course by mistake), and carry me off a prisoner.

At last peace between Prussia and Saxony was concluded, and the moment arrived for me to take up my official duties. I again put up at the 'Englische Hof,' where I had been staying in the month of June, and the recollection of those days of hope and disappointment—of the false bulletins of victory and the sudden awakening—prompted me to serious meditation. At Prague I met three companions of my youth, with whom I may say, I almost grew up, as their mother and mine were intimate friends—the three Counts Thun von Tetschen. These, who were my only intimate Austrian acquaintances, became in less than a twelvemonth the only men in Austria with whom I never exchanged another word—a thing that had never happened to me before, thanks to my only too forgiving and placable disposition.

The three brothers Thun, whom I had known when we were all children, frequently came from Tetschen to Dresden, and about 1830 their opinions were very liberal. Their sympathies were always with the Czechs, although they were not influenced by family traditions in that direction; and I often heard Leo say: 'I am not a German; I am a Bohemian.' Francis, the eldest, a man of noble and exceedingly sympathetic and artistic temperament, was very free in his views and opinions, as was partly shown by the mésalliance he contracted. The second, Fritz, always seemed to

me the most practical of the three. In the Central States we had a very high opinion of him, especially at the time when he was the presiding envoy at the Federal Assembly, and we greatly regretted that Prince Schwarzenberg was replaced by Count Buol and not by him. He was fully appreciated especially by Pfordten. The speeches he made at the Bohemian Landtag in 1867, however, were not calculated to give his hearers a high opinion of his statesmanlike capacity, whether they agreed with him or not. But Fritz Thun was decidedly the right man in the right place on several occasions, especially when he was envoy at Berlin. Had he been left there, much pernicious irritation would have been avoided. The third brother, Leo, was even in his youth considered the most gifted. The gloomy fire of his eyes and the abrupt style of his language always betrayed his impassioned and obstinate nature, which, indeed, fully justified what he said as to his nationality.

Of these three intimate friends of my youth, Francis welcomed me with cordial pleasure, while Leo received me, as the French say, 'comme un chien dans un jeu de quilles.' To him the appointment of a stranger was an abomination, and he let me know it. Fritz, although he was not exempt from a similar feeling, overcame it, and offered to stand up for my rights among his Bohemian fellow countrymen. He had left the diplomatic service, and I intended to induce him to return to it. As he did not wish to withdraw from the superintendence of his estates, I proposed to appoint him to the Embassy at Munich, where he had always been, and still was, very popular, and

where he could easily have combined the management of his property with his diplomatic pursuits. He did not accept my offer; but I continued for some time to be in friendly relations with him. The change in his sentiments, which soon became total estrangement, may be dated from the Bohemian Diet of 1867. He was proceeding with other members of the Diet to Vienna in order to explain to the Emperor the opposition of the majority, when I stopped him at Böhmisch-Trübau by a telegram stating that the decree for the dissolution of the Diet had been issued. With Leo I had a passage of arms in the Upper House. He became my bitterest opponent on the question of the Concordat, and our political divergence degenerated, to my great regret, into social estrangement.

Another meeting at Prague I shall never forget. I paid my respects to Cardinal Prince Schwarzenberg, having known him in former days when his brother, my great friend, was Minister. The Cardinal, who knew nothing of my appointment, and to whom I was not empowered to reveal it on the day of my visit, asked my opinion as to which of the Austrian diplomatists I considered most fitted to succeed Count Mensdorff. I gave him my impartial opinion as to various personages who might be considered qualified for the post. A few days after he dined with the Emperor and the new Minister. I hastened to explain why I had been so reticent; but this incident probably had something to do with the aversion he afterwards showed me. It has been imputed to his influence that I was at first only

Minister of Foreign Affairs, not Minister of the Imperial House. But the Emperor appointed me to the latter post a fortnight afterwards at Vienna.

At last the day of my nomination arrived. I was sworn in by Count Belcredi. In compliance with the Emperor's wish, I first had an interview with the Minister of State. Count Belcredi received me with the not very encouraging remark that my appointment would produce a very bad impression, 'because of your being,' he said, 'a stranger, a German and a Protestant.' I merely replied that I had not sought the honour conferred on me, but that I would do my best to prove myself worthy of it. Count Belcredi then expressed his apprehension lest I should drag Austria into another war; but I succeeded in reassuring him completely on this point. Our conversation ended more favourably than it began. I avoided entering into details of internal administration, by pointing out that I should first have to make myself acquainted with them. What most influenced Count Belcredi in my favour was my decided opinion that it would not be opportune for the Ministry to issue a programme on the Emperor's return to Vienna. He was relieved by this declaration, which, however, I was only prompted to make by the consideration that I did not wish to commit myself to any particular course of action with my imperfect knowledge of the situation. Count Belcredi then took me to my colleagues, who were assembled expressly for the occasion. I appeared before them like a candidate before his constituents,

and I had to answer various questions. The most searching were those of the Hungarian Court Chancellor, Majlàth, who seemed to give me credit for very scant sympathy towards Hungary, and to suspect my Germanising tendencies. I remained on the best terms with this amiable and gifted man, whose end was destined to be so terrible; and later on, when I was going too far for his highly conservative views, I often reverted in thought to his dread of my hostility to Hungary. Another of his fears proved equally groundless. He expected a universal outcry against the extradition of Count Teleki; but so long as I was an Austrian Minister, this transaction was never discussed,* and the assertion that I was reminded of Teleki's extradition by anonymous letters was utterly untrue. I must here admit to the credit of the Austrians that the cowardly practice of sending anonymous letters which flourishes everywhere else, is so little pre-

* This extradition of Count Teleki was made at the time the subject of the most venomous and unjustifiable attacks on the Saxon and Austrian Governments. Teleki came to Dresden with a forged English passport; and after seeing this document, I gave orders that he should be advised to take his departure as soon as possible. This hint was without result, which may have been owing to the advice of a certain Hungarian family which was then in the Saxon capital. Thus Teleki's own imprudence brought about a search of his house and his arrest. From that moment it was impossible to remove him by merely giving him orders to quit the country, considering the existing Treaties; nor was it possible to evade his extradition. But he was not given up until the promise was made that his life should not be in danger; and while the English papers were writing about his ill-treatment in prison, he was in reality well housed and fed in an official domicile, and even furs were given him on his journey. What I expected was that he would be confined at Josephstadt while burning questions were still the order of the day in Hungary, but that, when the excitement had subsided, he would be liberated. Instead of this, it was thought well at Vienna to set him at liberty in return for a promise given to his Majesty not to interfere in public affairs; thus stultifying in the most painful manner the Saxon Government, from whom the extradition had been demanded. It has been maintained that Teleki shot himself out of remorse at not having kept his promise; but from what I heard in Hungary, I am inclined to attribute his suicide to baffled ambition rather than to any other feeling.

valent at Vienna that I received only one or two of these missives.*

Although I had expressed myself in opposition to a programme of the entire Ministry, I thought it well to issue, in my capacity of Minister of Foreign Affairs, a circular to the Imperial embassies. I drew it up without delay. The Emperor was as pleased with its contents as with its rapid production. I quote the following passages:

'Much as I desire to apply my experiences, collected in another field of activity, to the Imperial service, I nevertheless consider myself severed from my political past ever since the day when I became an Austrian by the will of his Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty; and I will only bring into my new position the testimony of the deeply honoured sovereign whom I am conscious of having served with zeal and fidelity. I should be totally forgetful of the duties of my new career, were I thought capable of entering on it with prepossession or animosity. I feel myself free from both of these sentiments.

'The Imperial Government must now concentrate all its efforts in the task of obliterating the traces of a disastrous war, and there should be no doubt that it will pursue the policy of peace and mediation which it has always carried out. But if the unfortunate issue of the recent conflict makes that policy a necessity, it also imposes upon the Government the duty of being more jealous than ever of its

* Soon after my appointment I received letters from time to time, addressed to me in a lady's handwriting, and containing maxims, proverbs, and other useful advice in the Austrian dialect. I remember one of them, which I often quoted: 'Learn every language spoken in the Austrian empire, so that you may be able to tell every man in his mother tongue that he is an ass.'

dignity. I am convinced that the Imperial embassies will always maintain that dignity, and they will find in me never-failing support.'

I hope to prove in the course of this narrative that I was not untrue to any of the words I then wrote.

The Emperor was travelling through several other parts of Bohemia whilst I was returning to Vienna in company with the amiable and accomplished Vice-Admiral Baron Wüllerstorff, then Minister of Commerce. I took up my quarters in Vienna as usual at the 'Römische Kaiser.' It is easy to imagine what feelings inspired me on entering the rooms which I had left a few months previously in a very different frame of mind.

Next day I visited Count Mensdorff, who received me, still occupying Metternich's old arm-chair, in the most cordial manner, and only asked me for a few days' delay to prepare his departure. He gave up to me the two rooms looking on the 'Bellaria,' and for a fortnight I lived in the house with him and his family. There was, indeed, no reason for any disagreement between us. Count Mensdorff knew that I had done nothing to accelerate his resignation; and I had the consciousness, which every successor is not able to enjoy, of not having so much as formed the remotest wish for my predecessor's fall.

It has even been stated that Count Mensdorff himself proposed me to the Emperor as his successor, and the motive alleged was that he desired to frustrate the schemes of an ambitious diplomatist who wanted to usurp his place. I always doubted this story,

such petty malice not being consistent with Count Mensdorff's character. I am much more inclined to credit what has often been told me, that he was opposed to my appointment, not from any personal dislike, but because he feared that I desired a war of retaliation. Many inaccurate conjectures have been made as to the origin of my appointment. It has been attributed to King John and the Crown Prince Albert. Both have denied that they had any hand in it; and I know them too well to believe that, with their extreme scrupulousness, they would undertake the responsibility of taking a step not within their competence. I am sure that they spoke well of me when asked for their opinion, and that they must have influenced my appointment; but the original idea most probably originated with the Emperor alone.

Immediately after my installation, all the officials of the Ministry assembled in the great reception-room, and I addressed them in a cordial speech, in which I begged them always to show me the greatest frankness, adding that I expected them in return to abstain from all criticism in my absence. Count Mensdorff told me the same day with much amusement that an official who came to ask him for his last signature, had said to him: 'That was what I call a really good speech.'

CHAPTER XXXIV

1866

RETROSPECT.

Before I proceed to narrate my reminiscences of the period of five years during which I had the honour of being an Austrian Minister, I may indulge in a retrospect—as I did on taking office—of the time preceding my tenure of power, and of my own past as a Saxon Minister.

Great was the surprise and anger, in spite of affected indifference, at the news that the very man whom the National Liberal papers fancied they had despatched with their blows as he lay prostrate on the battle-field, was suddenly resuscitated as the Minister of a great empire. But even in circles where there had been no hostility towards me, no decided sympathy was shown; on the contrary, there was a good deal of doubt and suspicion. One of the envoys in Paris—not the Austrian one—said: 'Il a enterré

la Saxe, il a enterré la Confédération, il va enterrer l'Autriche;' and an eminent contributor to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, who afterwards became a great friend of mine, wrote to one of my acquaintances: 'Il est fâcheux qu'il n'ait pas la main heureuse.'

If those days had not been so sad for my beloved Saxony, nothing could have amused me more than the croaking of the National Liberal papers on the subject of my administration, which they declared was most disastrous to Saxony. Those who were never tired of so describing it, had attained their object, and had no further cause for complaint; and the only question remaining was whether the state of things I had endeavoured to maintain was or was not such as a conscientious Minister ought to uphold even at the risk of a war.

Was the German Confederation really so unendurable? For fifty years it secured internal peace for Germany, and preserved Europe from wars. That Germany was not involved in the first great European war, that of the Crimea, was entirely owing to the Confederation. The Italian War, which prepared that of 1866, might have been avoided, had Vienna appreciated, and Berlin respected, the Confederation more than was actually the case.

And how strangely has the idea of the Trias,* which I represented, been distorted! It is worthy of notice that this combination, which was even identified with 'Rheinbündelei,'† never received any sympathy in foreign countries, least of all in France.

* The scheme for dividing Germany into three groups, composed of Austria, Prussia, and the smaller States.

See page 107.

The French Cabinet perceived plainly what Germany was so blind as to ignore, that the third group could not be tampered with, and that it would be the best bulwark against special alliances with foreign Powers, such as that of Prussia with Italy, as it would then side with the Power not making the alliance.

As to the argument drawn from the state of Italy before it was united, there was really no analogy between Italy and Germany. In the former country there was no Confederation of the various States; each of them depended more or less on foreign Powers. Even Piedmont followed the lead of Austria up to 1847; those States which belonged to branches of the House of Austria did so naturally, and Naples oscillated between the influence of Austria and that of France.

Very different was the state of affairs in the various States of the German Confederation. Was there one of them that Gladstone could have held up to public abhorrence as he did the kingdom of Naples? I was on a short visit to Saxony after 1870, at the time when Prince Bismarck was first attempting to make the railways of the various States an Imperial monopoly. This measure excited bitter opposition, which a National Liberal paper deplored with the words: 'This narrow, local spirit reminds us of the worst times of Beust.' 'Nay, it explains the worst times of Beust,' said I to a friend. In those times the Saxon had not yet the gratification of having conquered Alsace, but the Alsatian manufactories were not competing with the Saxon; nor

had the Saxon the gratification of possessing a navy ready equipped for war; but the products of his industry were being sent across the sea far more frequently than now. He had not the satisfaction of being a member of the greatest military power in Europe; but he enjoyed the harmless pleasure of hearing Saxony raise her voice in the Confederation, and seeing her Minister become a member of a European Conference. He paid for this less dearly than now, when he is obliged to contribute sixty thousand men to the Imperial army—three times the number that was then considered sufficient to preserve the peace and security of the country. And finally, he did not possess the satisfaction of knowing that if he were ill-treated at Buenos-Ayres, a man-of-war would be sent to punish his tormentors. Such a disaster, however, rarely happened, while he was often in a position to want help and support in Paris, London, and St Petersburg, in which case he used to receive from the Saxon Ministers at those places every possible assistance, as they had both time and means to devote to him. Now, on the other hand, the German embassy throws him into the common pot, where little remains for each individual, considering the multitude of applicants. Moreover, in former days, it was the direct interest of the Saxon Ministers abroad to attend to the wants of their countrymen, as they were anxious that the Chambers should not carp at the Budget for Foreign Affairs.*

* If it be said that the war of 1870 involved the necessity of a firmer cohesion of Germany, it can be retorted that that war would not have taken place without the war of 1866. No human being ever dreamt of waging war on the German Confederation, and had France attacked Germany, the latter would have been as united as she was in 1840.

At the same time, if I give due prominence to the good qualities, nay, the advantages of a previous condition of things, this is not with the intention of making my German contemporaries dissatisfied with their present condition. If I am asked the question: Was I right in battling for seventeen years for the maintenance of the state of affairs that was then in existence? I think I may reply in the affirmative. Such a policy offered something certain and tolerable; while the policy intended to replace it was uncertain, had not yet been attempted, and was likely, if unsuccessful, to bring upon Germany the most appalling disasters. Prince Bismarck was supported by two powerful factors: rare genius and unexampled good fortune. The former was under his control; the latter not. Had fortune turned her back upon him in 1866 and he had used upon himself the revolver he is said to have carried in view of that contingency, he would have prepared a terrible future for Germany.

In 1866 there was no Emperor Nicholas to put a stop to hostilities, as in 1850; and Prussia would not have emerged from defeat without great loss of territory. If she could not forget the wound inflicted upon her pride by Olmütz, which caused her no material loss, how could she have resigned herself to give up any of her dominions? Germany would have been distracted by perpetual civil wars. I have often heard Austrians themselves maintain the utterly false opinion that Bismarck was right in believing that sooner or later Austria and Prussia must have come into collision, and that one of them must have been victorious. Those who speak thus overlook the fact

that the position of the rivals was not similar. Victorious Prussia could expel her defeated enemy from Germany: victorious Austria could not. All things considered, it may be said that I was defeated, but not that I was mistaken.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE LAST MONTHS OF 1866

THE MINISTRY AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS.—THE ANTI-PRUSSIAN FEELING PREVALENT IN VIENNA.

My position as a newly-appointed Minister in a foreign country was abnormal, and therefore beset with difficulties, more especially if it is considered that I became, in a most important department, the chief of a considerable number of persons whose high rank was likely to make them reluctant to obey the foreign intruder. On the whole, I must gratefully acknowledge that those with whom I stood in official relations received me, not only with the obedience due to the Emperor's commands, but with obliging courtesy. One man alone did not conceal his disappointment, and his answer to my circular was distinguished from the rest by its arrogant tone.

I was, however, greatly assisted by the fact that I had been, not merely acquainted, but intimate for

years with some of the most eminent members of Austrian diplomacy.

Among these the most prominent was Prince Richard Metternich. He was for three years Austrian envoy at Dresden, where he made his débût in very early youth. We had often met since, especially during my Paris Mission in 1866. Thus we were mutually on the footing of comrades, and I have had reason to think well of him ever since. Even in the critical year 1870, I could accuse him of nothing but excessive optimism—certainly not of ill-will. Prince Metternich has been greatly misjudged, and not appreciated as he deserved. He was clear-sighted, well versed in business routine, and possessed much judgment and industry. His remarkable facility in writing French was very agreeable to me, and I never had cause to complain of any infringement on his part of diplomatic forms. His chief defect was an innate indolence of disposition, which prevented him from seeing beyond the task immediately before him and from deriving information from other than official circles. Thus it came to pass that both the attitude of France in 1866 and her weakness in 1870 came upon him as a surprise. But it should not be forgotten that this social self-isolation was 'correct.' I myself, when Ambassador in Paris, found that it is impracticable to adopt freer views with impunity.

The Ambassador in London, Count Apponyi, was also one of my old friends. In younger days we met in Paris, and very often subsequently, above all in London, where I was staying in 1859 on a Mission, and in 1864 as a Member of the Conference on Danish

Affairs. We remained excellent friends, in spite of various unavoidable differences caused by the divergence of the views of the Austrian Cabinet and those of Germany, which I represented. Count Apponyi belonged to the old Austrian school, which considered the first principle of correct diplomacy to be self-effacement and utter abstinence from any initiative not prescribed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. If in 1864 he had been able to make Vienna accept my advice, which he fully appreciated, the war of 1866 would certainly not have taken place.

The strongest evidence of the diplomatic tradition above referred to was given, to my great surprise, by Count Apponyi himself, on the occasion of the Luxemburg affair and the London Protocol of 1867. No Cabinet had done more for the pacific settlement of that conflict than the Cabinet of Vienna, and the solution resulting from the London Protocol was chiefly due to its exertions, as official publications have placed beyond doubt. But Count Apponyi's self-effacement was such that the Protocol mentioned all the Powers by name except Austria.

A third Austrian diplomatist with whom I was intimate was Baron Kübeck, hitherto presiding envoy at the Federal Assembly in Frankfort. I had known him many years previously, when he was Secretary of Legation, and I was Saxon Resident Minister in London. I had communications with him later on at the Congress of Princes in Frankfort in 1863, and at the London Conference, and I had reason to praise the business capacity and the obliging courtesy of the Austrian representative. But even

Baron Kübeck, although extremely conscientious and industrious, paid homage to the old-fashioned maxim that it was better to do too little than too much.

More than once he surprised me by his optimism, which was not very consistent with his complaints of Prussia. I was in the habit of making almost annually, on my return from Gastein, a trip through South Germany and on the Rhine, and I always visited Baron Kübeck at Frankfort. He invariably ended our interviews by saying: 'We must own that things have improved,' when they were becoming worse and worse every day. In 1866, after the Bundestag had been compelled to escape from Frankfort and to take refuge at Augsburg, only to decree its own dissolution after the events of Nikolsburg, Baron Kübeck came to Vienna, and paid me a visit in order to mingle his sorrows with mine. 'My dear Kübeck,' I said, 'we have gained one point: You can no longer say that things have improved.'

It was a true pleasure to me to be able to suggest him to his Majesty as the first representative of Austria at the Italian Court. He filled this post in a manner that fully justified all expectations. He knew how to make himself agreeable without the slightest loss of dignity. The good feeling between Italy and Austria, the merit of which I can in part ascribe to myself, was not established after my retirement, but long before that event, and the Italian representatives in Vienna, Marchese Pepoli and Count Robilant, were highly pleased at my conciliatory attitude. The missions of Möring and Sonnaz also took place during my administration. In 1870

after the fall of the temporal Power, Baron Kübeck was unwilling to migrate to Rome; and as it happened at the same time to be necessary, in consequence of Count Karolyi's appointment as the first Ambassador to the German empire in Berlin, to remove Count Wimpffen to some other embassy, Baron Kübeck was nominated, at my suggestion, to the post at Constantinople, which had become vacant by the retirement of Baron Prokesch.

Baron Kübeck would have been the right man in the right place at Constantinople under the existing circumstances—an excellent man of business, laborious, calm and conciliatory. I have never been able to discover why Count Andrassy cancelled his nomination, and it is certain that this step was the indirect cause of Kübeck's untimely death. He was appointed Ambassador to the Holy See, and he died of the effects of the Roman climate.

I now come to the last of my old Austrian friends —Baron, afterwards Count Prokesch. When he was Ambassador in Berlin I had had a great deal to do with him, and found much that was attractive in his genial spirit, even though our views did not always coincide. We were on the most friendly terms, and he was sincerely delighted at my nomination. At first our relations were excellent, but later on we differed because his Turcophilism *quand-même* could not be reconciled with my more modern views. He did me a great injustice, however, by believing up to the day of his death that it was I who brought about his dismissal. When I accompanied the Emperor to Constantinople in 1869, we found Prokesch, who was

nearly eighty years old, very much altered, and the Emperor was even more struck than I was at the failure of his mental powers—indeed so much so, that his Majesty spoke to me on the advisability, nay the necessity, of giving him a successor. I objected to this, on the ground that Ali Pasha, who was then still living, placed great confidence in him. The result was that he was not pensioned until two years later.

In the Ministry itself I was no less fortunate in finding old friends, among whom I must mention Baron Meysenbug and Baron Biegeleben. These two men were the objects of numerous attacks, partly because of the ultramontane views with which they were credited, partly because of the acrimony of their language against Prussia, with which they were both reproached not without justice (Baron Biegeleben was the greatest offender in this respect) and which contributed in no small degree to the final rupture. It would have been very easy for me to obtain permission to make radical changes in the department; but I rejected every suggestion to that effect, not from personal considerations, but because I have always been reluctant to come to a decision to anybody's prejudice and to support any measure that had the appearance of persecution. This characteristic has often been alleged against me as a proof of weakness; and it has indeed given me more anxiety than advantage, more ingratitude than thanks. Yet I do not regret having possessed it; for if I enjoy in my old age a happy and peaceful mind, this is chiefly owing to the consciousness that I

have never injured anybody intentionally, not even my enemies.

I must acknowledge that in the house in the Ballplatz no one placed any difficulties in my way, and to this I especially alluded in my farewell speech at the time of my resignation.

In the Diplomatic Corps, too, I found old friends: Lord Bloomfield, the Duc de Gramont, Count Stackelberg, Baron von Werther, and several representatives of the minor States. The whole Diplomatic Corps was present at my first reception, and I remember that Baron Meysenbug, to whose house everybody went afterwards, came to me with the words: 'Grand succès sur toute la ligne.'

I must not leave it unrecorded that he who showed me most sympathy and confidence was no less a personage than the Papal Nuncio. He exclaimed, 'Che caro uomo!' to a lady of my acquaintance: and he said to me: 'Je le dis à tout le monde; ayez confiance dans le Barone di Beust.' When the question of the Concordat reached its unavoidable development, Monsignore Falcinelli said to me, half in sorrow, half in anger: 'Savez-vous ce que me disent mes amis? Ils me répètent sans cesse: qu'est ce que vous nous avez chanté avec le Barone di Beust?' But even in the midst of the most trying conflicts, this disappointed admirer of mine never had cause to complain of my conduct, and I know that he praised my behaviour repeatedly in his reports.

It is easy to understand that, considering my antecedents, I had to keep my eye on the Prussian representative in particular. It happened that Baron

Werther was my wife's cousin. On the day of my arrival I paid him a visit, and had a very satisfactory explanation with him. Baron Werther had been nominated to his post, but had not yet presented his credentials. He begged me to tell him frankly whether I would prefer anyone else as Ambassador; but I did not take the hint. Nevertheless, the re-appointment of Baron Werther after the events of 1866 was not a happy inspiration. The Prussian Government acted on the well-meant but mistaken view that an Ambassador whose conciliatory nature was known at Vienna would be acceptable in that city; but it forgot that under the circumstances anybody would be preferable to the man with whom Austria had had to deal before her defeat. Baron Werther never got over the unjust, though natural, treatment which he received; but he could never accuse me of having had a part in it. The bitterness which he felt in consequence, contributed in no slight degree to the mistakes which were afterwards committed, especially in his notorious despatch on the coronation at Pesth, while I was doing everything in my power to throw the veil of oblivion over the past, and to restore friendship and peace. I shall go further into this subject later on, and will here only record one fact that bears upon it. When Count Wimpffen was about to go on leave in the summer of 1867, Count Bismarck said to him on his departure: 'Give Baron Beust my hearty salutations.'

At Berlin the same thing happened twelve years later, on my appointment as Ambassador in

Paris. At first there was a great outcry against my nomination, which was followed by a sort of condescending indifference. I immediately gave orders to the official papers not to enter into any controversy with native or foreign journals about articles hostile to me. While I was thus careful to keep my début unconnected with any aggressive action or demonstration against Prussia, the independent press—even that section of it which was most partial to Germany—frequently published sharp attacks on the Berlin Cabinet.

Immediately after Königgrätz and Nikolsburg the general feeling was indeed resigned and peaceful, but by no means sympathetic, or free from rancour and suspicion. Whatever machinations might have been going on at that time against Prussia, they did not emanate from the Ballplatz.

The notion that my appointment was welcomed and even prompted by France was equally false. On the contrary, the first impression it produced in Paris might almost be called unfavourable. Napoleon III feared my supposed desire for revenge on Prussia and the complications it might entail, which would have been very unwelcome and disagreeable to him. The friendly relations of the following years were only established by degrees.

CHAPTER XXXVI

1866

THE EMPEROR.—COUNT BELCREDI.—AUSTRIAN POLICY IN GERMANY.—ITALY AND THE EAST.

Before speaking of my colleagues, I must not forget a more eminent personage—the Emperor. Many years later, in the speech I delivered in Paris at the banquet of the Austrian colony on the occasion of the Emperor's silver wedding, I mentioned some of my reminiscences of the year 1866, and I cannot do better than repeat the words I then used: 'Almost daily I had the opportunity of observing the Emperor's devotion to his duty after the severe blows of fate, and if I were not attached to his Majesty by tenfold bonds of grateful attachment, the recollection of those days would suffice to fill me with the profoundest admiration.'

With regard to my colleagues, I must chiefly describe Count Belcredi, the Minister of State, as I

had little direct communication with the others. My relations with them were agreeable, and I do not remember that they were ever otherwise.

My appointment was not pleasing to Count Belcredi; but if we at last came to an open rupture, this was as little due to steps taken by him against me, as to intrigues directed by me against him. Every attempt was made to divide us, and I do not doubt that people did their best to predispose each of us against the other. The Liberal newspapers expressed the greatest astonishment and disapproval at my having decided to enter a Cabinet of which Count Belcredi was a member. When I had done so, many people urged me to rid myself of so oppressive a yoke. A Deputy, who was a friend of mine, observed in reply to my remark that Count Belcredi was a clever dialectician: 'Say, rather, an admirable one; and that is the very reason why he must go!' If there was irritation or annoyance before the crisis which culminated in Count Belcredi's resignation, this was chiefly owing to our subordinates, for whose actions neither of us can be responsible. Our rupture was brought about by very important questions—the extraordinary Reichsrath* and the compromise with Hungary.

Before throwing light on the circumstances which resulted in the events of February 1867 and in my becoming President of the Ministry, I will give an account of what I did up to that time in the department confided to my care, that of Foreign Affairs. This is especially necessary as many people are labouring under

* See page 376.

the delusion that I either merely took advantage of the repose consequent upon the defeat of Königgrätz, or trod upon ground unknown to me. My first endeavour was to acquaint myself with the tasks Austria would have to perform. At that time it was indeed inevitable that one should look back on the past, and enter on a critical examination of it, for a period extending beyond my immediate predecessors to Metternich himself.

In the days of the first Eastern War, Count Buol was reproached for having desired to maintain Austria's position in three quarters at once—in Germany, in Italy, and in the East—thus again bearing witness to the truth of the proverb: 'Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint.' I always considered this reproach very unjust so far as the desire to maintain Austria's position was concerned; but it was certainly deserved as regards the measures taken to uphold that position.

Austria might then have played a great part with brilliant success had she understood the conditions under which alone she could play it. A few remarks will show how little this was the case.

To begin with Italy, Metternich's saying: 'l'Italie est une expression géographique,' produced an outcry when it became known in 1847; thirty, twenty, or even ten years earlier, it would have been regarded as a truism. There was no political Italy; Austria possessed a large portion of Italian territory; another considerable portion was in the hands of branches of the Imperial dynasty; two of the Italian kingdoms at that time owed their

very existence to a close union with Austria; and the Papal States recognised in that Power their chief protector. For such a commanding position to be lost, it was not sufficient that national risings, easily quelled, should take place, that one of the Italian sovereigns should make a hostile invasion in time of peace, ending with his defeat, or that, finally, a war with a great Power should have ended disastrously for Austria. This concatenation of events could never have occurred, had things not been treated in Vienna with Olympian tranquillity, and had the Austrian Cabinet realised the fact that more was wanted to uphold its commanding position than police supervision and military intervention. When the Kings of Sardinia and of Naples still felt themselves dependent on Austria, it was essential to keep them in a state of vassalage, not merely by averting revolutionary tendencies, but by preventing at the right moment such a system of government as would make these tendencies end in an explosion. The very opposite policy was followed: not merely in Naples and in Sardinia, but in the countries ruled by Princes of the House of Hapsburg, the sovereigns were allowed to do exactly as they pleased. The Duke of Modena was allowed to act as a petty tyrant, the Grand Duke of Tuscany as a Liberal dilettante; and when events culminated in their expulsion, Austria was good-natured enough to introduce her troops, and take upon herself all the odium, to say nothing of the sacrifices of blood and money. How strange it is that Austria did not become wiser with experience!

The generosity of Olmütz can be paralleled by the generosity of Novara. What power could then have prevented Austria from deriving full advantage from her victory? Certainly not Prussia, where I myself was a witness of the idolatry for Radetzki. Now-a-days the war indemnity of seventy-five millions appears almost ridiculous. And that was all that Austria took. Yet then was the time to do what Bismarck did in 1866 with the South German Governments—treat the Italian States with consideration, but insist on their binding themselves by treaty to a state of dependence on Austria.

Let it not be objected that Austria did not possess in Italy that which helped to construct Prussia's predominance in Germany: the national element. If the events in question had happened since 1848, that objection would have some justification. But we are talking of what might have happened ten, twenty, and thirty years previously. The problem was, to grant the just demands of the States and inhabitants of Italy, and to prevent the growth of national aspirations, which were, in Italy as in Germany, the instruments of the discontented and the turbulent. But as events proceeded, Austria became only the corporal and the policeman; and she was hated, notwithstanding the fact that her administration of Lombardy was so admirable that even at the present day the Milanese look back with regret on the prosperity they enjoyed in the time of the Austrian régime, although they naturally do not wish to return to the old political condition of things.

Even in 1849, after the battle of Novara, there

was still time to pursue another course. Austria had granted a Constitution almost at the same time. Had this Constitution been carried out, instead of being suspended and, after a lapse of two years, abolished, the Piedmontese machinations would have been frustrated, and the contrast would have been avoided between the constitutional régime of Piedmont and the revival of the absolute régime in Austria. Instead of this, the Concordat was concluded, and thereby Cavour was furnished with his strongest weapon against Austria.

As to Germany, it could not be said with regard to Austria: 'Fuori i Tedeschi!' for the heart of the Austrian empire was German, and its capital a city far more German than of any other nationality. He who has not quite lost his memory for the past, must acknowledge that the time is not very remote when the Austrians were much more popular than the Prussians throughout Germany even to the coast of the North Sea. How much could have been done with that popularity! How little exertion was wanted! A passive attitude would have sufficed. But Austria preferred even here to play the part of a policeman, and thus to 'travailler pour le Roi de Prusse.' During the reign of Frederick William the Third, it was Prussia's great object to suppress all constitutional movements, especially as she had promised a Constitution herself; and Austria, who had promised nothing, who had much less cause to fear a combination against herself in the Central States, did Prussia the favour of placing herself in the foremost rank on this question at the Federal

Assembly, thereby exposing herself to such odium that when times became more stirring after 1840, the German people looked upon Austria as the incarnation of reaction, while Prussia was regarded as her unwilling and enforced accomplice, and consequently as the Messiah of the future. I well remember what in the early days of my diplomatic service was the bugbear of Metternich's policy. In conversation everybody feared to express a Liberal opinion, as it might be reported at Vienna, and ruin the speaker's future career.

In the East affairs were very different. Here Austria had no problems to solve, as in Italy and Germany. Prince Metternich was assuredly in the right when he considered that Turkey would never again be a dangerous neighbour, and that her vicinity was far preferable to whatever might take her place. But even in this case Austria played the most odious part. Her attitude against the Greek War of Liberation did not prevent its success, and resulted in her exclusion from the list of European Powers under whose protection the Kingdom of Greece was placed. The injury thus inflicted on Austria in the public opinion of Europe down to the present time is incalculable. But even then it had become a maxim to proceed to such lengths in the support of the principle of Legitimacy as to allow the Sultan to do what he liked, thus showing him the same indulgence as was granted to the Italian Princes. This became even more the case during and after the Peace of Paris, and I could not help saying when I became an Austrian Minister: 'We have identified

ourselves with the principle of Legitimacy in Italy—it has been driven out, and we with it; in Germany we have identified ourselves with the Confederation—it has been dissolved, and our influence in Germany has gone with it; do we mean to wait until the Sultan, with whom we are now identifying ourselves, is driven out, when we shall lose our influence and prestige in Turkey too?'

CHAPTER XXXVII

1866

AUSTRIA'S PROBLEMS IN THE EAST.—MY PROGRAMME IN THE FIRST RED BOOK.—MY DESPATCH OF THE 1ST OF JANUARY 1867.—REVISION OF THE TREATY OF PARIS.—EVACUATION OF THE CITADEL OF BELGRADE.

At the Lord Mayor's dinner which took place in 1878 after the Congress of Berlin, Lord Beaconsfield made a brilliant speech in praise of the Treaty of Berlin, pointing out in particular how Turkey had been strengthened by being relieved of the burthen and anxiety of Bulgaria and Bosnia. After dinner I said to him: 'The idea that you have just expressed is clever but not new. The same was said of us when we were relieved of our Italian anxieties; but the consequence was that some years later we were also relieved of our German anxieties, both anxieties combining against us for our liberation.'

This second relief coincided with my entrance into office. The territory that still gave us anxiety

was the East. It claimed and received my attention.

I had numerous occasions, even before I entered the Austrian service, of occupying myself with Eastern questions, and even of taking an active part in them. I have already stated the circumstances by which I obtained, notwithstanding my modest position, a more thorough knowledge of the pending negotiations than any other Minister of the Central States; and the steps I took in the Eastern question soon after my appointment as Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs were inspired and explained by my former experiences in Eastern affairs.

The thoughts resulting from these experiences developed in me the following programme: Revision of the Treaty of Paris so as to allow the right of control to accompany the obligation of protection; a benevolent attitude towards the Christian inhabitants of the contiguous Turkish Provinces, without prejudice to the integrity of the Turkish Empire; opposition to the Russian monopoly of this attitude towards the Slav population; and the inclusion of Russia in the programme by a just and innocuous concession, namely: the abolition of the so-called neutralisation of the Black Sea, by which Russian men-of-war are excluded from its waters.

It will be remembered that in my correspondence with the Russian Chancellor, Count Nesselrode, in the year 1855, I stated that such an unnatural restriction could not last, and that ten or twelve years would not elapse before some one demanded its withdrawal, little thinking that the person to whom I

referred would be myself. In fact, this restriction could practically only have the result of deeply offending the national pride of Russia, and of leaving a permanent bitterness which was the more natural as, though the restriction prevented the Russian fleet from occupying the Black Sea, it did not prevent the Turkish and other fleets from taking up their position it its neighbourhood, thus placing Russia at an exceptional disadvantage.

I became still more convinced that this restriction was practically of very little use when I was in communication on the subject with London and Paris early in 1867. At both places the Cabinets protested, and reminded me of the bloodshed in the Crimean War; but when I put the question whether a second Crimean War would be fought if Russia were gradually to construct a fleet at Nikolaieff, the reply was in the negative.

Two steps were taken towards the execution of my programme: the withdrawal of the Turkish garrison from the citadel of Belgrade, and the despatch to Prince Metternich of the 1st of January 1867.

How often have I been condemned for recommending the evacuation of Belgrade! And yet no urgent reason could be adduced for regretting this step. On the contrary: had the very small Turkish garrison still been at Belgrade in 1868, it is more than probable that a sanguinary conflict would have taken place after the assassination of Prince Michael. And moreover, I was assured by everybody who knew the locality that the so-called citadel was a mere heap of stones, quite incapable of defence, and

that the little garrison would therefore only have served to compromise the Turkish army or to cause unnecessary provocation.

All that relates to the proposal to revise the Treaty of Paris is fully detailed in the despatch addressed by me on the 1st of January 1867 to Prince Metternich.* Events have proved the justice of the views expressed in that despatch. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877 showed the hollowness of the protection guaranteed to the Ottoman empire by the Peace of Paris, and Russia's arbitrary proceedings in 1870 on the question of the Black Sea caused the question of the integrity of the Ottoman empire, which had been the object of the solicitude of Paris and London, to dwindle into insignificance; while if my proposal had been attended to at the right moment, the powers might have obtained valuable concessions from Russia as regards Turkey in return for the abolition of the provisions relative to the Black Sea. The failure of the attempt I then made—which Dr Busch in his 'Reichskanzler,' even describes as an intrigue against Prussia and Germany—was chiefly owing to the accident that my confidential despatch, which was only written with a view to sound the various Governments on the subject, was prematurely published, in consequence of an unexplained indiscretion or inattention on the part of the French Cabinet. One of the results of its premature publication was that my suggestion, which was erroneously supposed to have been made with the concurrence of Russia, was by no means favourably received at St Petersburg.

* Appendix D.

The explanation is that Prince Gortschakoff, though he already contemplated the abolition of the restrictive article of the Treaty of Paris, wished to reserve the credit of the achievement to himself. I have even been assured that he never forgave me for trying to forestall him in this respect. This, of course, only increased and aggravated the disinclination which was felt in Paris and London to such a measure.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

1866

LIBERAL OR REACTIONARY?—ENLIGHTENED DESPOTISM.—COMPROMISE WITH HUNGARY.

If in foreign questions I was no novice, I was the more so in those of internal administration. In Saxony, it is true, I was at the head of the Home Department, taking part in its reorganisation, and fighting many hard battles in the Chambers on Constitutional questions; but I could not ignore the fact that in Austria I found myself face to face with totally different elements and conditions, and that I had to avoid nothing more carefully than the inconsiderate application of foreign remedies. My first task was to acquire information. It was for this reason, as I have already stated, that I rejected every suggestion of alterations in other departments, and was opposed to the issue of any programme. This did not prevent me, however, from constantly discussing internal questions with Count Belcredi.

An old uncle of mine, who had long been envoy of the Grand-ducal Saxon courts to the Confederation, said to me one day: 'The man who has never been a Liberal in his youth is either deficient in head or in heart.' I do not think that I ever showed myself wanting in either, and I must own that in my youth, when Liberalism implied quite as much as Socialism does now, I had very strong Liberal leanings. I owe this especially to my studies at the University of Göttingen, and to the English school, then brilliantly represented by Heeren and Sartorius. The July Revolution—its influence on Germany, and on Saxony in particular, which in 1831 entered the ranks of the Constitutional States—and the Polish Insurrection, all took place after I had left the University, and made a deep impression on my mind. As I advanced in years, my views became more mature, but I have never been anti-Liberal. If I was decried as reactionary during the first part of my Saxon administration, it was owing to the course events had taken. I found in 1849 a country more undermined by democratic societies than any other German State, and in a condition of semi-anarchy; and I and my colleagues had at first nothing to do but to restore order and prevent the recurrence of such a state of things. I do not claim credit for the fact that the long and sanguinary Insurrection of May was not followed by a single execution; but it clearly proves the falsehood of the then current description of the Saxon administration as 'ultra-reactionary.'

When I came to Austria I was often obliged to hear the assertion that what Austria wanted,

was an 'enlightened despotism.' 'Very true,' I said; 'but when despotism is introduced it is unfortunately neither enlightened, nor desirous of being so, and I am therefore of opinion that much more can be done with a constitutional system.' Nor had I long to wait for an opportunity of proving the soundness of my views.

I cannot say that during the five years of my tenure of office at Vienna I lived in a Castle of Indolence. This would, indeed, by no means have suited my inclination; on the contrary, scarcely had I assumed my duties than I was called upon, although at that time only Minister of Foreign Affairs, to give my attention to an internal question of extreme importance and of decisive influence on the prestige and power of the Austrian empire in Europe—the question of the Hungarian Compromise.

In Austria, but still more in foreign countries, I have constantly heard people say, sometimes with praise, sometimes with blame, that I was the creator of the Compromise and the originator of the Dualistic System, not to say its inventor.

I do not claim that honour; but no less a person than Count Andrassy has said that without me the Compromise would have had to wait a long time for its completion. I do not regret what I did, and I am ready to assume the whole responsibility of what was a most ungrateful task. But that the view above stated is a mistaken one is proved by the following circumstances:

1. The separate position of Hungary in the Monarchy before 1848.

2. The state of Hungary after the Revolution.

3. The failure to enter into a timely arrangement while the claims of Hungary were as yet moderate.

4. The concessions made before 1866; and

5. The more exacting demands of Hungary after 1866.

With regard to the state of things before 1848, I cannot adduce any better authority than Dr Herbst, that same Dr Herbst who attacked my policy towards Hungary in the Reichsrath of 1867 more sharply than anybody else. In one of his last speeches to the constituents of a Bohemian district he said, as reported in the *Neue Freie Presse* of the 30th of May 1885:

'The principle of the Unity of the State has only been altered in form by the Dualistic System. Hungary never belonged to Austria, like Bohemia and Southern Austria. The Hungarian Constitution had shown itself full of vitality for many years, and when it was revised and restored in 1867, nothing was revived which had not previously existed and flourished.'* The Dualistic System was not, therefore, a novelty imported by the 'imported statesman.'

I need not enter into details on the state of Hungary during the interval between the suppression of the Rebellion and the Italian War. What has been written on the subject up to the present date, chiefly by the Kossuth Party, is much exaggerated, and the same may be said of Madame Adam's *Patrie Hongroise*,† which describes a reign of terror as of a

* These remarks and those that follow were only inserted by me on a recent revision of my M.S., which explains the appearance of so recent a date as 1885 in a chapter written many years previously.

† In the concluding part of this work I shall give details about Madame Adam and my acquaintance with her.

second Alba, and horrors like those of the guillotine during the French Revolution. I remember the progress made by the Emperor through Hungary in 1852, when the papers were full of descriptions of floating banners and maidens clad in white. In the same year Prince Bismarck was entrusted with a special mission to Vienna; and when he went to the palace at Buda to pay his respects to the Emperor, he sent his wife a long description of a popular fête given by the people in honour of his Majesty. I also remember Haynau's fits of kindness to the populace at Pesth. It must in justice be acknowledged that the Imperial Government in Hungary was not one of constant ill-treatment and oppression;* the condition of the Hungarians was not so intolerable, but they prized their Constitution above everything else, and knew how to suffer for it. There are few instances of Hungarians entering the Imperial service, especially as regards appointments outside of Hungary; while another race,† which complains quite as much of its having been deprived of the old Constitution of its country, never disdained the Imperial service. The presence for a time at Pesth of the Archduke Albrecht, and the subsequent appointment of Count Palffy as Governor, were conciliatory steps, but the chasm between Austria and Hungary remained.

I was not the first to pursue the path I chose.

* The relative contentment of the Hungarians was illustrated by the *Figaro* of Vienna in a series of letters purporting to be written by a Hungarian vagrant: 'What have I gained' he says, 'by the change of administration? When Bach was Minister, if I stole a goose I got six weeks' imprisonment, and board and lodging free. Now I get twenty-five lashes, and nothing free.'

† The Czechs.

Others had advanced a considerable way upon it, and the question was whether to advance or to go back. I found the Government in a state of vacillation between advancing and retreating. It was either my fault or my merit, as the reader may consider it, that I put an end to this condition of affairs.

The following facts will justify my assertion that before my entrance into office considerable progress had been made on the path of conciliation.

The speech from the throne of the 14th of December 1865, as well as the royal message of the 3rd of March 1866, was full of consideration for the views of the Hungarians, and great stress was laid on the Emperor's wish to induce the Hungarian Diet to take measures for a mutual arrangement. Both documents contain positive concessions of great importance, involving a departure from the policy formerly pursued. In the speech from the throne it was frankly admitted, with regard to that portion of the laws of 1848 which concerned the operation of the rights of the sovereign and the limitations of the executive power, that their legality was open to an objection. The speech further announced that the Crown itself would remove the obstacle to a compromise by abandoning the point of view of strict legal continuity, thus clearly acknowledging that the Pragmatic Sanction, as the fundamental law of the State, guaranteed the independence of the internal jurisdiction and administration of the kingdom of Hungary and its dependencies. The justification of Hungarian independence within these limits was acknowledged without any reservation. The speech

further expressly held out the prospect of a coronation, which was to take place on the condition that the enactments of the laws of 1848 should undergo careful revision and be altered in accordance with existing circumstances.

As to the state of Hungary after the battle of Königgrätz, a very short retrospect will suffice. When Usedom's notorious despatch became known in 1868, there was a universal outcry of indignation at Vienna. I took the liberty of saying that the contents of the despatch were neither new to me nor to the public. There was therefore no reason to judge Prussian policy more severely, but there was reason to judge my proceedings in Hungary less harshly.

I must finally add another circumstance to the five already enumerated: the voices which were raised even in Austria for the necessity of an agreement.

Kaiserfeld spoke as follows in the Styrian Diet, as reported by the *Neue Freie Presse* of the 11th of December 1866: 'Peace with Hungary means the existence or the non-existence of Austria, and that peace must be concluded without delay. An extended Reichsrath would produce only national, not political parties, thus making Parliamentary Government impossible. Only a Constitutional Austria is possible.'

Giskra also said in the Moravian Diet: 'I consider the Agreement with Hungary absolutely necessary for the existence and development of Austria.' (*Neue Freie Presse*, 26th January 1869.)

The press teemed with similar utterances. I will only mention the leading article of the *Neue Freie Presse* of the 12th of February 1867, which says: 'A compromise, even a disadvantageous compromise, is, in short, the lesser evil.'

END OF VOL. I.

APPENDIX

A

Despatch from Baron Beust to the Saxon Envoy in London relative to the Bamberg Conferences.

Mr Forbes m'a donné lecture d'une dépêche de Mr le comte de Clarendon, concernant les conférences de Bamberg, qui semblent avoir causé un vif déplaisir à Sa Seigneurie. Vous connaissez, Mr le comte, les résultats de ces conférences. Nous n'avons eu jusqu'ici aucune raison de les regretter, et les doutes mêmes qui auraient pu naître à ce sujet, ont entièrement disparu à la suite de la réponse des cabinets de Vienne et de Berlin à la note que les huit cours représentées à Bamberg leur avaient présentée.

Quelque satisfaisante que soit ainsi la solution de la question qui restait à régler entre les deux grandes puissances et les autres états de la confédération appellés a accéder au traité du 20 avril, nous n'en serions pas moins disposés à tenir compte des susceptibilités du cabinet britannique, dont le jugement ne saurait nous être indifférent, et à lui fournir telles explications qui fussent de nature à l'éclairer sur les intentions qui nous ont guidés, si les représentations que Mr Forbes s'est trouvé chargé de nous faire, avaient été revêtues des formes analogues à la dignité que tout gouvernement souverain, quelle que soit l'étendue du pays qu'il représente, doit être jaloux de faire respecter.

Le langage que Mr le comte de Clarendon a cru devoir nous tenir est tel qu'il fallait tous les égards que nous devons au gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique, pour nous décider à ne pas préférer le silence à une réponse. Cependant, afin de faire de cette dépêche l'objet d'un examen consciencieux, j'en ai demandé au Ministre d'Angleterre une communication écrite. Mr Forbes ne s'y est pas cru autorisé. Il me semble que, lorsqu'un gouvernement ne craint pas d'entrer dans de pareilles explications avec un gouvernement étranger, et qu'il va même, ainsi que je l'ai appris depuis—car la dépêche a été communiquée ailleurs par les Missions britanniques—à donner à ses accusations du retentissement, il serait au moins juste de mettre le governement à qui s'adressent des reproches aussi graves, en mesure de les peser mûrement et d'y opposer une défense raisonnée. J'ai dû me contenter d'une seconde lecture et d'imprimer le mieux possible dans ma mémoire les principaux passages de la pièce en question.

Mr le comte de Clarendon se flatte que les États représentés à Bamberg recevront une réponse qui sera proportionnée à leur intervention mal inspirée ("*ill-advised interference.*" Vous voyez que par ma traduction je cherche à adoucir le mot). Cette réponse est aujourd'hui connue de tout le monde. Nous ignorons si le Cabinet britannique en est satisfait, ainsi que nous l'espérons sincèrement ; ce qui est bien certain, c'est qu'elle nous satisfait, et qu'il en résulte clairement que les deux grandes puissances allemandes n'ont trouvé dans la note que nous leurs avions adressée, aucun sujet d'y voir une intervention mal inspirée ; et cependant s'il y avait eu lieu à nous faire un pareil reproche —Mr le comte de Clarendon sera assez juste pour le reconnaître—c'eût été bien plutôt aux Cabinets de Vienne et de Berlin à nous l'adresser. Mais indépendamment du blâme que notre conduite paraît avoir encouru à Londres, j'ai quelque peine à m'expliquer ce qui a pu amener Lord Clarendon à y voir une intervention quelconque. La question que l'on appelle la question d'Orient a été débattue à différentes reprises dans des conférences auxquelles la Confédération germanique est restée étrangère, et je ne sache pas qu'aucun des governements allemands de second ordre se soit permis d'intervenir dans ces débats. C'est à la suite d'un traité conclu entre l'Autriche et la Prusse, et d'une invitation que ces deux puissances ont addressée aux autres États de l'Allemagne, que ceux-ci ont été mis en demeure de se prononcer sur une question fédérale. Il s'agissait donc de remplir à la fois un devoir, et d'user d'un droit, dans l'exercice duquel nous ne saurions reconnaître à aucune puissance étrangère le pouvoir de

nous imposer des limites, ni admettre une intervention fût-elle la mieux inspirée.

Je ne puis passer ici sous silence que l'Envoyé de France m'a également communiqué une dépêche de son Gouvernement à la suite des conférences de Bamberg, et je me plais à constater que dans cette dépêche, portant le cachet d'une politesse exquise, Mr Drouyn de Lhuys s'est abstenu de tout commentaire sur les résolutions de Bamberg, et s'est borné à relever un seul point, savoir la faculté que nous avions revendiquée pour la Confédération d'être représentée dans les négociations ultérieures. C'est là une question que nous ne croyons pas douteuse, mais dont une discussion même anticipée devait nous paraître parfaitement convenable.

En repassant dans ma mémoire la suite de la dépêche de Mr le comte de Clarendon, j'arrive à des reproches qui s'adressent plutôt à la Russie qu'à nous-mêmes. Cette puissance est accusée d'avoir de tout temps semé la discorde en Allemagne, et d'effrayer les Gouvernements allemands par le fantôme de la révolution. Sans prétendre faire l'avocat de la Russie, comme nous le reproche un autre passage de la dépêche, il m'est difficile de trouver la première de ces accusations tout-à-fait juste, en songeant à la manière dont la Russie est intervenue dans les affaires de l'Allemagne pendant les années où des complications intérieures menaçaient l'union et la paix de l'Allemagne, et où tous les efforts du Cabinet de St Pétersbourg tendaient à aplanir les différends survenus entre les deux grandes puissances allemandes.

Quant à la révolution dont la Russie se servirait avec nous comme d'un épouvantail, personne mieux que moi n'a été à même d'en connaître la portée. Appellé aux affaires au commencement de l'année 1849, je m'assis en face du fantôme dont les formes se dessinaient très-nettement autour de moi ; et deux mois plus tard je le vis ensanglanter pendant six journées consécutives les rues de Dresde.

J'ai appris alors comment il faut s'y prendre avec le spectre, et les souvenirs de cette époque m'autorisent à répondre à Lord Clarendon, qu'on peut très-bien croire à l'existence du fantôme, sans être soupçonné de le redouter. Il est vrai que Lord Clarendon dans la même dépêche nous fait observer comment il n'y a rien à craindre de la révolution aujourd'hui que l'Autriche est alliée avec l'Angleterre et la France. Je serais le premier à repousser les conclusions malveillantes que l'on pourrait tirer de cette combinaison, mais ce que je ne puis admettre non plus qu'avec une certaine réserve, c'est que la révolution soit désarmée, comme nous le dit également Lord

Clarendon, par la politique populaire des grands Cabinets. L'expérience des années 1848 à 1849 nous a laissé de trop graves leçons, pour ne pas nous méfier de cette déroute apparente des partis révolutionnaires en présence de l'initiative des Gouvernements. Mais, suivant la dépêche de Lord Clarendon, c'est la Russie qui, après avoir prêché la crainte de la révolution, s'est chargée de la patroniser, de la faire elle-même, car déjà ses agents parcourent la Hongrie pour fomenter des troubles. Je n'ai pas de notions particulières sur ce qui se passa dans ces deux pays ; mais placé par la confiance du Roi à la tête du Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'administration de la Police, j'ai été à même d'observer les allées et venues des agents révolutionnaires en Allemagne, et je dois dire que le pays d'où ils nous venaient, n'était point la Russie, et que les passeports dont ils se trouvaient munis n'étaient point des passeports russes. Il y a ensuite une considération dont je ne puis pas entièrement me défendre. S'il est vrai que c'est la Russie qui patronise la révolution : comment se fait-il que les partis qui ont chance d'y gagner et qui y travaillent sourdement et ouvertement depuis des années, ne cessent de prêcher la guerre contre cette puissance ?

Qu'on me pardonne ces digressions ; je conviens qu'elles ont aussi peu de rapport avec la grande question du moment qu'il n'y en avait entre la note de Bamberg et notre prétendue peur de la révolution.

Malheureusement il me reste à répondre à des attaques infiniment plus directes et plus graves. Lord Clarendon nous accuse littéralement 'd'être aveuglés au point de ne pas comprendre que dans une grande crise les petites jalousies doivent se taire, et de sacrifier les intérêts de l'Allemagne à des intrigues russes.' Je serais curieux de savoir ce qui a pu autoriser Mr le comte de Clarendon à nous reprocher de petites jalousies, et à expliquer notre manière d'envisager les intérêts de l'Allemagne— matière dans laquelle, par parenthèse, nous croyons le dernier des gouvernements allemands meilleur juge que l'Étranger — par des intrigues dont nous serions on dupes ou complices. Lord Clarendon n'a pas jugé à propos de citer un seul fait ou acte à l'appui de pareilles suppositions, et, en effet, il lui aurait été difficile d'en trouver. Une accusation lancée aussi légèrement rend toute défense inutile ; nous ne pouvons que la regretter profondément.

Il en est de même du reproche qu'on nous adresse, enfin, d'avoir donné à l'Europe le spectacle de l'Allemagne désunie. Les faits mêmes y répondent mieux que ne le pourrait une défense éloquente. L'union de l'Allemagne n'a jamais été mieux assurée qu'elle ne l'est

dans ce moment, et jamais le principe fédéral n'a fait de meilleures preuves. Les deux grandes puissances allemandes ont témoignées par leur déclaration du 16 juin combien elles tiennent à relever la constitution fédérale et à respecter la position indépendante des autres États confédérés ; et ceux-ci à leur tour, en se ralliant aux deux Puissances, après un examen mûr et consciencieux de leurs propositions et avec l'intention bien marquée de placer le but de l'union allemande au-dessus de toute autre considération, ont rempli dignement leur tâche comme États indépendants et comme Confédérés.

Nous ne craignons donc point les souvenirs de Bamberg, dont la dépêche de Lord Clarendon finit en quelque sorte par nous menacer. Nous n'avons jamais eu d'autre prétention que de faire un acte allemand ; ce n'est pas nous qui nous plaçons sur le terrain européen. Si on nous y appelle, nous avons le ferme espoir que le même esprit de justice et d'équité qui a déjà dicté le jugement de l'Allemagne, prévaudra également dans les conseils de l'Europe.

Je terminerai par une dernière réflexion. Vous savez que la note de Bamberg fût concertée et adoptée par huit Gouvernements allemands ; d'après ce qui me revient, la dépêche que m'a communiqué Mr Forbes n'a été adressée qu'au Gouvernement du Roi seul. Je ne demande pas d'explications de ce fait. Ce qui précède vous prouvera que nous ne reculons pas devant la responsabilité d'un acte dont nous sommes solidaires.

Vous savez, Mr le Comte, quel prix le Gouvernement du Roi attache à des sentiments bienveillants du Gouvernement de la Reine ; vous concevez donc aisément combien ces explications ont dû m'être pénibles ; mais je suis certain qu'elles ne déplairont pas au Cabinet de Sa Majesté britannique. Le Gouvernement Anglais, si jaloux de faire respecter partout le droit et d'empêcher qu'il n'y soit porté atteinte, ne voudra pas nous faire un crime de tenir au nôtre ; et Lord Clarendon avec son esprit éclairé et impartial, loin de s'offenser de notre franchise, y verra l'empreinte de la vérité, et regrettera, j'en suis sûr, de nous avoir supposé des mobiles qui nous sont étrangers.

Vous donnerez lecture de cette dépêche à Mr le comte de Clarendon, et vous êtes autorisé à en donner copie, si elle vous était demandée.

Recevez, etc., (signé) BEUST.

B

Correspondence between Baron Beust and Count Nesselrode relative to the Crimean War

À Son Excellence Monsieur le Baron de Beust.

St Petersbourg, le 14-26 *Novembre* 1855.

Monsieur le Baron,—Je m'empresse de répondre à la lettre confidentielle que Votre Excellence m'a fait l'honneur de m'adresser le 12 Novembre dernier, à son retour de Paris, et dont le contenu a fait l'objet de mes plus sérieuses méditations. Avant d'entrer dans le fond des questions traitées par vous avec une supériorité de vues et une lucidité de pensée si remarquables, j'éprouve le besoin de vous offrir tous mes remercîments du nouveau service rendu à notre cause par le voyage que vous avez entrepris à Paris. Nul plus que vous, Monsieur le Baron, n'était en mesure d'y faire entendre la vérité sur la seule politique que doit suivre l'Allemagne dans la conjoncture actuelle, pour sauvegarder à la fois son intérêt propre et celui de l'Europe toute entière. Si la franchise énergique de votre langage, loin de blesser l'Empereur des Français, nous a valu de sa part un accueil distingué et des marques de sa confiance, nous ne pouvons que nous féliciter de ce nouvel hommage rendu à la fermeté de vos principes et à la noblesse de votre caractère.

J'arrive maintenant à l'examen des dispositions pacifiques qui nous ont été témoignées et qui confirment, ainsi que vous l'avez constaté, les ouvertures faites par le Comte Walewski à Monsieur le Baron de Seebach.

Croyez bien, le Cabinet de St Pétersbourg veut la paix, aussi sincèrement pour le moins qu'on la désire à Paris, et qu'il n'a pas tenu à lui de répondre plus explicitement aux manifestations du Cabinet des Tuileries que je ne l'ai fait dans la lettre ci-jointe au Baron de Seebach, destinée à être mise sous les yeux du Comte Walewski. J'y ajouterai quelques explications pour votre information particulière, en retour de votre confiance envers moi et de votre sympathie pour la Russie.

Vous me faites l'honneur de me dire qu'à Paris on n'a pas trouvé de solution du 3^{me} point différente de celles qui furent discutées aux conférences de Vienne. Nous nous trouvons à l'égard de ce nœud de la question dans une position absolument semblable. Ce que nous avons repoussé aux conférences de Vienne, nous le repoussons encore aujourd'hui. Nous ne demandons, comme alors, que le maintien des droits de souveraineté sur notre territoire et la conservation de

l'honneur et de la dignité du pays. En acceptant les quatre points préalables comme bases de négociations, nous étions sans doute préparés à de sacrifices,—le langage de nos Plénipotentiaires à Vienne et leurs déclarations officielles aux conférences en font pleinement foi,—mais après avoir vu nos différentes propositions rejetées par la conférence presque sans discussion, bien que les Plénipotentiaires alliés eussent reconnu que la meilleure paix serait celle qui concilierait l'honneur de la Russie avec l'intérêt de l'Europe et l'indépendance de la Turquie, est-ce bien à nous à faire de nouvelles propositions? Vous avez constaté vous même, Monsieur le Baron, combien l'Empereur des Français tient à l'alliance anglaise ; n'est-il donc point à prévoir qu'avant d'entamer avec nous une négociation sérieuse, il fera part à son allié de nos propositions pour régler en définitive sa réponse sur l'accueil que nos ouvertures auront trouvé à Londres? Nous sommes si persuadés de l'intimité de cette alliance, que l'acceptant comme une nécessité dominant la situation, nous avons instruit le Baron de Seebach de faire remarquer dans ses entretiens avec le Comte Walewski que nous ne prétendons nullement obtenir de la France des facilités pour la paix, qu'elle ne serait point certaine de voir adopter par son alliée.

Les difficultés qui s'opposent encore à la conclusion de la paix sont, d'après ce que je viens d'avoir l'honneur de vous exposer, en premier lieu dans la situation, indépendantes de celles qui tiennent à la forme et à la substance du traité à venir, à l'égard desquelles, comme l' Empereur des Français, nous sommes également obligés de ne point dépasser certaines limites.

En vous faisant part, sans détour ni arrière-pensée, des reflexions que m'ont suggérés les pourparlers qui ont eu lieu à Paris, il est presque superflu de vous faire observer que la présente réponse est aussi strictement confidentielle que l'a été votre lettre, pour laquelle je vous réitère ici me plus vives actions de grâce.

Veuillez les agréer, Monsieur le Baron, ainsi que l'assurance de ma haute considération et de mon invariable attachement.

(signé) NESSELRODE.

À Son Excellence
Monsieur le Chancelier Comte de Nesselrode.

Dresde, le 9 *Decembre* 1855.

Monsieur le Comte,—Je viens de recevoir par l'entremise de Monsieur le Baron de Budberg la lettre que Votre Excellence m'a fait l'honneur de m'écrire à la date du 26 mois passé, et je m'empresse de Lui en offrir mes remerciments bien sincères.

S'il m'est permis de regretter profondément de ne pas voir

partagées par Votre Excellence les vues que j'ai osé Lui exposer, ma reconnaissance, je le sens, n'en doit être que plus vive, car c'est me donner un preuve bien précieuse de votre confiance, Monsieur le Comte, que d'accueillir, comme vous l'avez fait, des développements qui ne s'accordaient guère avec votre manière de voir.

Ce serait abuser de votre indulgence extrême que de revenir sur le sujet de ma lettre, car je ne dois pas oublier que c'est une décision suprême, sur laquelle est basée la vôtre.

Cependant, Monsieur de Budberg ayant bien voulu entrer avec moi dans une discussion de la question qui m'a si vivement préoccupé, j'ai pris la liberté d'user du droit de réplique en tâchant de justifier par des arguments puisés dans ma conviction la plus intime des conseils que je persiste à croire salutaires, tant dans l'intérêt de l'Allemagne que de celui de la Russie.

Monsieur de Schrœder vient de s'acquitter des ordres que votre Excellence lui a transmis en dernier lieu par le télégraphe. J'ai cru pouvoir m'autoriser de ce message pour engager Monsieur de Budberg à communiquer à Votre Excellence ma lettre, s'il le jugeait convenable. Je ne suis pas homme à changer ni de principes, ni de sentiments, mais j'agis en conscience, et si la sagesse du Cabinet Impérial avait réussi à trouver une issue meilleure, personne n'en serait plus content que moi.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Comte, l'assurance renouvelée de la plus haute considération avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être, Monsieur le Comte, de Votre Excellence, etc.

(signé) BEUST.

À Monsieur de Budberg, Ministre de Russie À Berlin.

Dresde, *le* 9 *Decembre* 1855.

Monsieur le Baron,—Monsieur de Schrœder m'a exactement remis la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'adresser à la date du 3 du mois courant, et à laquelle se trouvait jointe la réponse de Monsieur le Chancelier à celle que par votre obligeante entremise je m'étais permis de lui faire parvenir.

Lorsque j'eus l'avantage de vous voir ici, vous m'avez permis de vous exposer avec franchise mes vues sur les exigences de la situation actuelle ; vous ne m'en voudrez donc pas de l'aveu que je vous fais en toute sincérité du découragement où m'a jeté la réponse du Comte de Nesselrode. Je me félicite aujourd'hui de ne pas trop m'être pressé de vous en écrire, car les nouvelles le plus récentes qu'on me dit avoir été transmises de Pétersbourg à Berlin par le télégraphe, me permettent d'entrevoir une lueur d'espérance pacifique qui ne perçait pas précisement à travers les communications que je vous dois.

Malgré l'autorisation que les dernières lignes de votre obligeante lettre semblent m'en accorder, vous sentez bien, Monsieur le Baron, qu'il ne peut pas entrer dans ma pensée de continuer ma correspondance avec Monsieur le Chancelier à moins d'y être spécialement engagé par Son Excellence. Je dois comprendre que les ouvertures qui viennent de m'être faites ont pour base une décision suprême, et je craindrais d'ailleurs d'abuser étrangement de l'indulgence que Monsieur le Comte de Nesselrode m'a encore témoignée cette fois-ci en accueillant de la manière la plus aimable des paroles qui ne s'accordaient guère avec sa manière de voir. C'est pour cette même raison que j'ai de nouveau recours à votre obligeance éprouvée, en vous priant d'être auprès de Monsieur le Chancelier l'interprète de ma vive et profonde reconnaissance.

Mais en même temps, Monsieur le Baron, vous me permettrez, je l'espère, de revenir en forme de causerie confidentielle avec vous, sur le sujet de ma lettre à Monsieur le Comte de Nesselrode. Vous jugerez vous-même, s'il y a lieu ou non d'en faire part à Monsieur le Chancelier.

Je vous dirai franchement que je m'y trouve entraîné par un double motif, d'abord par le désir de me rendre utile dans la faible mesure de mes moyens, et ensuite par une considération d'amour—propre. Je tiens, je l'avoue, à justifier mes propres idées en présence d'une autorité supérieure.

Il n'a pu m'échapper que dans l'état actuel de choses, la soi-disante sollicitude pour l'intégrité de l'Empire ottoman ne nécessité d'aucune façon de nouvelles garanties contre les vues ambitieuses qu'on s'est plu à prêter à la Russie, mais il m'a semblé que précisement dans l'état actuel des choses il s'agissait moins de la Turquie et de la question d'Orient proprement dite, que de la situation que les évènements ont créé à la Russie et d'où il importe de la faire sortir dans son propre intérêt aussi bien que dans celui de l'Europe.

Votre lettre, Monsieur le Baron, comme celle de Monsieur le Chancelier, me font observer que la Russie ne saurait accepter des conditions blessantes pour son honneur et sa dignité. Je serais désolé qu'on pût me croire capable de méconnaître la valeur et la portée de cette considération. Ce qui peut vous prouver combien je sais l'apprécier au contraire, c'est qu'il y a environ huit mois, lorsque la demande de limitation se trouvait formulée pour la première fois, j'ai déclaré hautement dans des pièces officielles qu'un grand empire comme la Russie ne pouvait y souscrire sans avoir accepté la chance des armes. Mais aujourd'hui nous ne pouvons guère nous dissimuler le changement de situation amené par les évènements. Je sais bien que la Russie n'en est pas reduite à

accepter toute condition qu'il plairait à ses ennemis de lui imposer. Cependant il n'en est pas moins positif qu'après une défense héroique Sévastopol est tombé, que la flotte est détruite, et que les alliés se trouvent maîtres de plusieurs positions importantes sur votre territoire. Lorsque, se trouvant dans une situation semblable, une puissance belligérente *veut* la paix, il me semble qu'il lui est impossible de maintenir comme absolu le refus de toute condition portant une atteinte quelconque à sa dignité. Il me paraît que les questions de dignité doivent forcément se régler sur les nécessités du moment, et que le plus grand empire ne peut pas être censé avoir forfait à son honneur, lorsqu'après avoir vaillamment combattu il juge de son intérêt d'acheter par une paix, onéreuse en apparence plutôt qu'en réalité, l'avantage et la facilité de retrouver les moyens nécessaires de réparer ces mêmes pertes dans d'autres circonstances. Afin de vous faire connaître toute ma pensée sous ce dernier point de vue, je me permettrai de vous transmettre l'extrait ci-joint de ma lettre à Monsieur le Chancelier. Il est bien possible que vous en jugiez autrement, et je m'y résigne d'avance. Mais je crois de mon devoir d'appeler toute votre attention sur les conséquences très-fâcheuses que peut entraîner un refus péremptoire de toute condition impliquant un sacrifice d'amour propre et de dignité de la part de la Russie par rapport à la politique à venir des neutres.

Veuillez ne pas vous méprendre sur le sens de mes paroles. Vous connaissez mes principes aussi bien que mes sentiments. Mais vous devez comprendre que du moment où la nécessité d'un sacrifice pareil ressort de la situation même, un refus absolu d'y souscrire met en doute la volonté de faire la paix, et qu'il constitue la supposition du contraire, je dirai plus, la nécessité d'une guerre prolongée. Or, dans un moment où de jour en jour le besoin du rétablissement de la paix se fera sentir davantage, il est évident qu'une manifestation pareille ne saurait faciliter la politique suivie jusqu'à présent par les neutres, mais qu'elle doit la rendre difficile au plus haut degré.

Je le repète, je crois remplir un devoir envers vous en vous signalant de pareils écueils, et je le fais au risque soit de vous déplaire, soit de prêcher un converti, car c'est plutôt cette dernière chance que les nouvelles les plus récentes de Pétersbourg me permettent d'envisager.

Si, comme vous le voyez par l'extrait de ma lettre à Monsieur le Chancelier, nous recommandons aujourd'hui des concessions dont nous hésitions autrefois à appuyer la demande, je ne pense pas que vous puissiez nous trouver en contradiction avec nous-mêmes, et je serais bien loin de regretter en rien la politique suivie par la Con-

fédération. Cette politique était, comme elle l'est aujourd'hui, sage dans l'intéret de l'Allemagne, amicale pour la Russie. Si nous nous sommes refusés lors des conférences de Vienne à peser sur la Russie dans le sens de l'interprétation occidentale du troisième point, c'est que nous pouvions et voulions maintenir intacte à la Russie la chance des armes en Crimée. L'attitude gardée par l'Europe centrale empêche à l'heure qu'il est les puissances occidentales de faire des prétentions au delà de celles formulées avant la prise de Sévastopol ; et, forts de cette conviction, nous pouvons et devont appuyer sur la nécessité d'en finir avec la guerre aujourd'hui qu'il nous est impossible d'en attendre des résultats qui permettent une solution équitable et modérée.

Vous me parlez d'indiscrétions commises au sujet des pourparlers entre Monsieur de Seebach et le Comte Walewski. S'il y en a eues je le déplore vivement, mais soyez bien certain que pour ma part, j'en suis parfaitement innocent. Je puis vous certifier que je n'en ai fait part à personne excepté à Monsieur de Schrœder, et que nos agents diplomatiques n'en ont pas reçu le plus petit mot.

Permettez-moi enfin de prévenir un malentendu possible. Il paraît qu'à Pétersbourg on a attaché un importance particulière à ce que le Cabinet des Tuileries, à la même époque où l'on me tenait à Paris un langage pacifique, avait fait des démarches à Vienne pour amener l'Autriche à des nouveaux engagements contre la Russie. Vous sentez bien que je ne puis pas prétendre être initié dans les négociations qui se poursuivent entre Vienne et Paris. Cependant s'il s'agit peut-être du projet d'une nouvelle démonstration que l'Autriche devait être engagée à faire de concert avec la Confédération germanique, je dois dire qu'à Paris on ne m'en a pas fait de mystère, et qu'en autant que des propositions analogues devaient être portées à la diète de Francfort, je puis me flatter d'avoir contribué à les empêcher comme inopportunes.

C'est avec un véritable plaisir que je profite de cette occasion pour vous réitérer, Monsieur le Baron, les assurances de ma haute considération et de mon sincère dévouement.

(signé) BEUST.

C

Despatch to the Saxon Minister Herr von Könneritz, at Vienna, relative to the Italian War.

Dresden, *April* 15, 1859.

Your Excellency has already been informed that the Imperial and Royal Cabinet has sent to the Royal Court a confidential communication on the Mission of his Imperial and Royal Highness Archduke Albrecht to Berlin; and I do not doubt that Count Buol will allow you confidentially to examine this important document.

After having submitted it to his Majesty, our most gracious master, I send your Excellency the following instructions, in compliance with his Majesty's wish.

First of all you will be good enough to express to Count Buol the thanks of the Royal Government for the confidential communication above referred to, and ask him to express them in the name of his Majesty the King to his Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty.

Your Excellency will, at the same time, express the hope that the happily-chosen mediation of the august envoy of his Apostolic Majesty may succeed in directing the undoubtedly beneficial dispositions of the Royal Prussian Government into such a channel as to bring about an agreement, so ardently desired by us, between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, tending to the power and security of the Germanic Confederation.

We eagerly look forward to the promised further communications as to the success of the mission of his Imperial Highness the Archduke. As meanwhile Count von Buol's circular expresses the wish that the German Governments should at once take forthcoming events into consideration, I do not hesitate to express in a few sentences our views on the subjects in question.

1. As soon as Austria makes the promised communication to the Bund, the Royal Government will give its vote according to Article XLVII of the Vienna Agreement, viz., for a recognition of the danger threatening the Confederate territory, and for war preparations. We do not doubt that thus far the votes of all the Confederate States, Prussia included, will be unanimous.

2. We should look upon a wider resolution, in favour of immediate participation in the war, thereby involving a declaration of war by the Bund, as certain of success if Prussia were to give it her assent. In the contrary case we would earnestly recommend

the consideration of the consequences of a resolution carried in opposition to the Prussian vote, not so much from anxiety as to Germany's position in case she were attacked by France, as in that case (independently of the Prussian contingent which would of course be placed in the field) the Upper Rhine would be sufficiently protected by the Austrian forces and those of the other Confederate States. We do not doubt, moreover, that Prussia would defend Germany against such an attack with all the resources at her disposal. What we rather fear is that, knowing Prussia to be in the background, France would not venture to attack Germany; and that the Bund would then find it difficult to take part, without the aid of Prussia, in an offensive war against France which could only be of advantage to Austria, and that thus the sacrifices made by the Bund would be fruitless. It would appear to us far more practicable, in the supposed case of Prussia not taking part in the war as a European Power, to reserve for a later resolution the assistance contemplated by Article XLVII of the Vienna Agreement, as we are of opinion that this would more easily open the way to an entire agreement with Prussia, and that an opposite course would only too surely bring about the eventuality contemplated at the end of this despatch, which is certainly to be avoided as much as possible.

3. We cannot unreservedly agree to the supposition that if Prussia were to offer her assistance as a great Power, all the German governments would join her, 'without attaching decisive importance to the mere form of union,' and we think it our duty to say so at the present moment. We are ready to fulfil our duties as a member of the Bund in the widest and most unselfish sense; but in the interest of the Bund itself, which it is our duty to defend, we adhere to the necessity of maintaining its constitution most rigorously in these serious times. We entertain all the more the belief that an exceptional deviation from that Constitution cannot be intended by the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, as the unanimous and sincere adhesion of the Bund is beyond all doubt, and we cannot even conceive what reasons of expediency could justify any exception to this unanimity.

With equal candour we give our opinion (4) on the concluding sentence of the Imperial circular, from which we are obliged to differ.

Should Prussia wish to object to a constitutional resolution of the Bund, it would become the task of the other Governments to secure the execution of that resolution by all the means at their disposal. But we could not allow the sovereigns of Germany, who

might be of another opinion, to take measures to enforce their views independently with or without the formal registration of the views of the majority. We would not hesitate to protest against such a proceeding, if it did not remain within the bounds of Article XLII of the Vienna Agreement, and if the Bund had not full command over the contingents of the States in question.

We are convinced that the Imperial and Royal Cabinet will justly appreciate this sincere opinion, and that it will not ignore the consideration that it is of extreme importance to preserve the integrity of the constitution of the Bund against any opposition, (which that Cabinet itself thinks might be attempted) to constitutional decisions.

Your Excellency will further perceive from the preceding remarks that I have only developed the views of the Royal Government with regard to an eventual conference of the Confederation, without alluding to the negotiations now pending between the great Cabinets on the subject of a universal disarmament and the convocation of a Congress.

My telegraphic despatch of the day before yesterday has placed your Excellency in the position of announcing the decided view of our Government that the last French proposal might be accepted without danger, and without prejudice to the views of Austria, provided only a brief limit of time were allowed for summoning the Congress, and deciding the question of disarmament. It seemed to us to be worthy of consideration whether the French proposal had merely a formal character, or whether it was the foundation of a policy of delay. In the former case, a decision would be possible in the first days of the Congress; in the latter, the dissolution of the Congress after eight days would be justified.

Finally, we request your Excellency, when expressing yourself in accordance with the above views to Count von Buol, to lay stress on the fact that the eventuality of an aggressive proceeding on the part of Austria, as mentioned in the Minister's circular, is not alluded to only because his Majesty feels confident that the wisdom of his Majesty the Emperor will leave no means untried which can prevent a decision so all-important to the political position of Austria and Germany.

(signed) BEUST.

D

Despatch to Prince Metternich relative to the Black Sea.

Le Baron de Beust au Prince de Metternich À Paris.

Vienne, le 1*er Janvier* 1867.

Pendant le séjour que vous venez de faire à Vienne, je vous ai entretenu, mon Prince, de nos graves préoccupations par rapport aux affaires d'Orient et à notre intention de nous ouvrir à ce sujet en toute confiance au Cabinet de Tuileries.

La situation où se trouve en ce moment la Turquie mérite en effet l'attention sérieuse des Cabinets. Toutes les nouvelles s'accordent à faire pressentir que l'insurrection de Candie, bien que comprimée dans la majeure partie de l'île, n'en continuera pas moins à couver jusqu'au printemps. Dans la plupart des autres parties de l'Empire ottoman habitées par des chrétiens tout est préparé pour une levée de boucliers ; les excitations venant de Grèce alimentent sans cesse la fermentation dans les provinces limitrophes, et il est tel point du territoire turc où l'agitation s'est déjà, à l'heure qu'il est, traduite en lutte ouverte.

Nous n'avons pas à analyser ici les causes qui ont déterminé cet entraînement soudain des esprits, ni à examiner les fautes qui peuvent avoir contribué à l'accélérer ou les moyens par lesquels il eût été possible d'arrêter les progrès du mal.

Ce qu'il y a de certain, c'est que cet état de choses est de nature à faire surgir de graves dangers pour la paix de l'Europe, si les Puissances ne s'appliquent, en temps opportun, à prendre des mesures efficaces pour les prévenir.

Il est impossible de se dissimuler que les remèdes à l'aide desquels on a cherché, dans le cours des dernières années, à maintenir le *statu quo* en Orient, se sont montrés insuffisants à maîtriser des difficultés que chaque jour est venu accroître.

En effet, la marche des évenements qui ont ensanglanté l'île de Crète semble dénoter un certain amoindrissement dans la force de résistance dont dispose le Gouvernement du Sultan, puisqu'un territoire d'une étendue peu considérable dont, il est vrai, la position insulaire augmente l'importance, est en état de tenir si longtemps en échec la puissance mussulmane.

D'un autre côté, depuis la signature du traité de Paris de 1856, la condition générale des États européens a subi des modifications notables et, grâce aux succès remportés par le principe de nationalité

en dehors de la Turquie, le désir d'obtenir des triomphes pareils a dû se faire jour avec un redoublement de vivacité au sein des populations chrétiennes de cet empire, même indépendamment de toute impulsion de l'étranger.

La physionomie de l'Orient prise dans son ensemble se présente donc aujourd'hui sous un aspect essentiellement différent de celui qu'elle avait en 1856, et les stipulations de cette époque, aussi bien que les conventions spéciales dont elles furent suivies, dépassées qu'elles sont, sur plus d'un point important, par les évènements survenus depuis, ne suffisent plus aux nécessités de la situation actuelle.

Ajoutons que, tout en reconnaissant la Conférence de Paris comme virtuellement existante, l'on ne saurait disconvenir qu'elle s'est montrée au-dessous de sa tâche ou, tout au moins, que les circonstances ont tourné de façon à lui en rendre l'accomplissement impossible. La Conférence a été amenée, par la force des choses, a enterrer plus d'une des dispositions capitales de l'Acte de 1856. C'est ainsi qu'elle a donné le coup de grâce à celle qui consacrait la séparation des Principautés danubiennes, en autorisant l'établissement d'un corps politique unitaire. C'est ainsi que, tout récemment encore, à la chute du dernier Hospodar, elle n'a pu faire respecter les traités pour la nomination de son successeur. En plus d'une occasion le rôle de la Conférence de Paris s'est borné à donner, après coup, sa sanction à des faits accomplis en dehors de son action, et qui étaient en désaccord avec les conventions placées sous sa sauvegarde.

Il y a là plus de motifs qu'il n'en faut pour faire aux Cabinets de sérieuses réflexions et pour les engager à se demander ce qu'il y aurait à faire dans le but de préserver l'Europe des convulsions où la jetterait l'écroulement subit de la domination ottomane, et si le moment n'est pas venu de procéder à une révision du traité de Paris du 30 mars 1856 et des actes subséquents, à opérer de commun accord par les Puissances qui les ont conclus, le Royaume de Italie prenant aujourd'hui la place du Royaume de Sardaigne.

Cette révision aurait, ce nous semble, à se proposer un double but.

Le traité de Paris a laissé dans le vague la pensée de ses auteurs en ce qui concerne les droits des populations chrétiennes sujettes du Sultan. En mentionnant expressément le Hat-houmaïoum, le traité a donné, il est vrai, une consécration indirecte aux dispositions de cet acte ; mais les généralités dans lesquelles se renferme le firman, qui ne fait qu'ébaucher les institutions destinées à protéger les raïah, sont loin de leur offrir des garanties sérieuses. La première tache de la Conférence de révision consisterait donc à dissiper ces incerti-

tudes, cause incessante de mécontentement pour les chrétiens de la Turquie. Toutes les Puissances intéressées auraient à s'occuper soigneusement de cette question, chacune d'elles mettant en lumière le point de vue auquel elle est portée à l'envisager suivant sa position particulière ; et ces points de vue divers seraient ensuite discutées en Conférence. Cette manière de procéder nous paraît offrir le meilleur moyen d'arriver à un résultat qui, une fois obtenu, serait présenté à la Sublime Porte avec toute l'autorité qui appartient à un avis unanime de l'Europe.

En nous prononçant dans des termes aussi positifs, nous n'entendons nullement anticiper sur la forme qu'on jugerait convenable d'adopter pour faire agréer au Gouvernement ottoman les propositions de la Conférence. Il va sans dire que cette forme devrait être de nature à ménager autant que possible l'autorité de la Porte et à faciliter son consentement. Mais en présence du danger qu'il s'agit de conjurer, le but qu'on se propose d'atteindre serait manqué d'avance si le moindre doute devait subsister sur l'efficacité de cette intervention de l'Europe.

Le travail que les Puissances assumeraient de cette manière est, nous le savons, loin d'être facile ; il l'est d'autant moins qu'elles devraient se garder surtout de tailler sur un seul et même patron des combinaisons qui auraient à s'appliquer à des contrées si diverses entre elles sous le rapport de la religion, de la race, du degré de civilisation et des intérêts matériels.

Pour cette même raison, il faudrait examiner mûrement la question de savoir quelle serait la marche la plus convenable à suivre pour s'enquérir des besoins de chaque province. Selon nous, le mode qui se recommanderait de préférence serait d'en charger les organes de chacun des Gouvernements intéressés, lesquels, afin d'être bien renseignés, devraient consulter des hommes spéciaux appartenant au pays et dont l'impartialité et la rectitude de jugement leur seraient connues.

A côté de cet objet principal qu'une révision du traité de Paris doit avoir en vue, il en est un autre, non moins important à nos yeux : celui de s'assurer du concours loyal et sincère de toutes les parties intervenantes. A ce point de vue on ne saurait nier que le traité de 1856 n'a pas atteint complètement son but. Comme ce traité était destiné à terminer une guerre que la Porte et ses Alliés avaient soutenue avec succès contre la Russie, il devait paraître indispensable d'y introduire des clauses restrictives de la libre disposition d'une partie des moyens d'action que cette dernière Puissance pourrait, dans un cas donné, vouloir diriger contre l'Empire ottoman. On s'y sentait d'autant plus disposé que, pour tout le

reste, on entendait épargner à la Cour de St. Pétersbourg des conditions trop onéreuses. Aussi fut-elle ménagée en ce qu'on ne lui demanda qu'une cession de territoire de peu d'importance, et le prix de la lutte se résuma dans les entraves imposées aux mouvements de la Russie du côté de la Turquie. On espérait, par là, garantir l'Europe, pendant un long délai, des complications dont la menaçait la question d'Orient. Tout en rendant justice aux motifs qui, à cette époque, ont dicté les déterminations de l'Europe, on ne saurait se dissimuler que c'est aller contre la nature des choses que d'interdire à un État d'une étendue et d'une population aussi immense sa liberté d'allures dans le cercle de son action légitime. Une pareille interdiction était peu propre à détourner, à la longue, les complications que l'on avait à cœur d'éviter. Toute compression excessive a pour effet de provoquer l'expansion de la force comprimée dans une autre direction et, de toute manière, en agissant comme on l'a fait, on a rendu difficile au Gouvernement russe de prendre de bon cœur sa position dans le concert européen nouvellement établi pour les affaires d'Orient.

Autant qu'il s'agit donc des restrictions dont nous venons de parler, il importe de distinguer ce qui est possible de ce qui ne l'est pas. A notre avis, il y a lieu de tenir compte, dans une mesure convenable, du rôle naturel qu'assure à la Russie en Orient la communauté des institutions religieuses, et de se menager, par une attitude conciliante, le concours sincère de cette Puissance dans les affaires de Levant.

La question que nous traitons ici mérite, croyons-nous, d'être prise en considération le plus promptement possible. Il serait à désirer, selon nous, qu'un concert nouveau pût s'établir dans des formes différentes de celles qui ont présidé jusqu'ici à l'action de la Conférence de Paris. Des dissentiments regrettables ont trop souvent paralysé cette action, et il nous semble préférable d'entrer sans hésiter dans une voie nouvelle pour assurer l'entente des Puissances.

Si les Cabinets partageaient les vues que nous venons d'exposer, nous proposerions que chacun d'eux voulût bien, par les moyens indiqués plus haut, se procurer les informations nécessaires au sujet des vœux et des besoins des différentes populations chrétiennes soumises à la Porte, et que les matériaux ainsi recueillis fissent l'objet des délibérations d'une Conférence composée des plénipotentiaires de toutes les Cours garantes.

Une question à examiner serait celle de savoir s'il conviendrait d'admettre à cette Conférence un Réprésentant de la Sublime Porte. Nous sommes loin de méconnaître que le respect dû à l'indépendance

de la Turquie conseillerait de la faire intervenir dans ces délibérations. Mais, plus les dangers qu'il s'agit de conjurer sont graves et imminents, et plus on doit être pénétré de l'urgence qu'il y a d'avoir recours aux moyens les plus efficaces ; or, l'on ne saurait disconvenir que la participation da la Porte rendrait on ne peut plus difficile aux Puissances d'arriver à une entente avec toute la promptitude commandée par les circonstances. On devrait donc, ce nous semble, s'attacher à démontrer au Gouvernement ottoman que son propre intérêt, loin de souffrir de son absence de la Conférence, exigerait aux contraire qu'il restât étranger à ses travaux. L'attitude d'abstention pleine d'égards dont toutes les Cours ont fait preuve dans la question des Principautés, dans celle de Candie, et même dans celle de Serbie, doit éclairer la Porte sur les véritables intentions de l'Europe à son égard. D'un autre côté, elle ne peut fermer les yeux aux sinistres lueurs qui traversent aujourd'hui son empire et doivent lui faire craindre un embrasement général. Nous ne mettons donc point en doute que les Cabinets réussiront à la convaincre de l'impossiblité de conserver désormais, sans modification, le régime d'administration actuel, et à lui donner confiance dans les vues aussi désintéressées que bienveillantes qui inspireront leurs propositions. Nous pensons aussi que la Porte accueillera avec reconnaissance les mesures que les Puissances garantes jugeront propres à créer un ordre de choses durable dans la presqu'île des Balkans.

En revanche, et c'est par là que nous complétons l'expression de notre pensée, il nous reste à énoncer un vœu dont l'accomplissement aurait, à notre avis, pour le Gouvernement ottoman infiniment plus de valeur que sa participation aux travaux de la Conférence. Dans notre opinion, il serait aussi injuste qu'imprudent d'imposer une pareille intervention à la Turquie sans la mettre à l'abri des mouvements insurrectionnels qui la menacent. Si les Puissances s'engagent dans la voie que nous venons d'indiquer, elles doivent le faire connaître aussitôt à l'Europe entière et partant aux populations chrétiennes de la Turquie, mais en même temps elles doivent hautement manifester l'intention de ne pas souffrir que la révolte vienne traverser leurs délibérations. Ces populations doivent être prévenues que ce n'est qu'en rentrant dans l'ordre et en gardant une attitude parfaitement calme qu'elles peuvent compter sur une intervention en leur faveur, et qu'autrement l'Europe avisera aux moyens de les contenir.

Veuillez, mon Prince, donner lecture de la présente dépêche à Monsieur le Marquis de Moustier, et lui faire connaître notre intention de transmettre une communication analogue aux Cabinets de Berlin, de Florence, de Londres et de Saint-Pétersbourg. Mais, avant de faire

cette dernière démarche, nous serions heureux que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté l'Emperor des Français voulût bien nous communiquer sa manière de voir, disposés que nous sommes à tenir compte des modifications qui lui sembleraient utiles.

Recevez, etc. etc.

(signé) BEUST.

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